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The Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D.

BY

JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.



NEW YORK
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B I O G R A P H Y

VOLUME TWENTY-FIVE

THE LIFE



SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL.D.



JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

VOL. III.

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THE
LIFE OF SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL.D.

CHAPTER I.

1773.

Edinburgh—Lord Elibank—Edinburgh Castle—Fingal—Credulity—Second Sight—Garriek and Foote as Companions—Moravian Missions and Methodism—History—Robertson—Rebellion—Lord Mansfield—Richardson—Private Life of a Judge—Blair—Boswell's Imitations—Officers of the Army—Academy for Deaf and Dumb—Scotch Highlander and English Sailor—Roslin and Hawthornden—Cranston—Sir John Dalrymple—Johnson's Departure for London—Letters from Lord Hailes and Mr. Dempster.

Wednesday, Nov. 10.—Old Mr. Drummond, the bookseller, came to breakfast. Dr. Johnson and he had not met for ten years. There was respect on his side, and kindness on Dr. Johnson's. Soon afterwards Lord Elibank came in, and was much pleased at seeing Dr. Johnson in Scotland. His lordship said, "hardly anything seemed to him more improbable." Dr. Johnston had a very high opinion of him. Speaking of him to me, he characterised him thus: "Lord Elibank has read a great deal. It is true, I can find in books all that he has read; but he has a great deal of what is in books, proved by the test of real life." Indeed, there have been few men whose conversation discovered more knowledge enlivened by fancy.¹ He published several small pieces of distinguished merit; and has

¹ Lord Elibank made a happy resort on Dr. Johnson's definition of oats, as the food of horses in England and of men in Scotland: "Yes," said he; "and where else will you see such horses and such men?"—WALTER SCOTT.

left some in manuscript, in particular an account of the expedition against Carthagena, in which he served as an officer in the army. His writings deserve to be collected. He was the early patron of Dr. Robertson, the historian, and Mr. Home, the tragic poet ; who, when they were ministers of country parishes, lived near his seat. He told me, "I saw these lads had talents, and they were much with me." I hope they will pay a grateful tribute to his memory.

The morning was chiefly taken up by Dr. Johnson's giving him an account of our Tour. The subject of difference in political principles was introduced. JOHNSON. "It is much increased by opposition. There was a violent Whig, with whom I used to contend with great eagerness. After his death I felt my Toryism much abated." I suppose he meant Mr. Walmesley of Lichfield, whose character he has drawn so well in his life of Edmund Smith.

Mr. Nairne came in, and he and I accompanied Dr. Johnson to Edinburgh castle, which he owned was "a great place." But I must mention, as a striking instance of that spirit of contradiction to which he had a strong propensity, when Lord Elibank was some days after talking of it with the natural elation of a Scotchman, or of any man who is proud of a stately fortress in his own country, Dr. Johnson affected to despise it, observing, that "it would make a good *prison* in ENGLAND."

Lest it should be supposed that I have suppressed one of his sallies against my country, it may not be improper here to correct a mistaken account that has been circulated, as to his conversation this day. It has been said, that being desired to attend to the noble prospect from the Castle-hill, he replied, 'Sir, the noblest prospect that a Scotchman ever sees is the high road that leads him to London.' This lively sarcasm was thrown out at a tavern in London, in my presence, many years before.

We had with us to-day at dinner, at my house, the Lady Dowager Colvill, and Lady Anne Erskine, sisters of the Earl of Kelly ; the Hon. Archibald Erskine, who has now succeeded to that title ; Lord Elibank, the Rev. Dr. Blair, Mr. Tytler, the acute vindicator of Mary, Queen of Scots, and some other friends.

Fingal being talked of, Dr. Johnson, who used to boast that he

had, from the first, resisted both Ossian and the giants of Patagonia, averred his positive disbelief of its authenticity. Lord Elibank said, "I am sure it is not M'Pherson's. Mr. Johnson, I keep company a great deal with you ; it is known I do. I may borrow from you better things than I can say myself, and give them as my own ; but if I should, every body will know whose they are." The doctor was not softened by this compliment. He denied merit to Fingal, supposing it to be the production of a man who has had the advantages that the present age affords ; and said, "nothing is more easy than to write enough in that style if once you begin."¹

One gentleman in company expressing his opinion "that Fingal was certainly genuine, for that he had heard a great part of it repeated in the original,"—Dr. Johnson indignantly asked him, whether he understood the original ; to which an answer being given in the negative, "Why, then," said Dr. Johnson, "we see to what this testimony comes : thus it is."²

I mentioned this as a remarkable proof how liable the mind of man is to credulity, when not guarded by such strict examination as that which Dr. Johnson habitually practised. The talents and integrity of the gentleman who made the remark are unquestionable ; yet, had not Dr. Johnson made him advert to the consideration, that he who does not understand a language cannot know that something which is recited to him is in that language, he might have believed, and reported to this hour, that he had "heard a great part of Fingal repeated in the original."

For the satisfaction of those on the north of the Tweed, who may think Dr. Johnson's account of Caledonian credulity and inaccuracy too strong, it is but fair to add, that he admitted the

¹ This story, told in Commodore Byron's Voyage, of his having fallen in with a gigantic tribe of natives, on the coast of Patagonia.—C.

² I desire not to be understood as agreeing *entirely* with the opinions of Dr. Johnson, which I relate without any remark. The many imitations, however, of Fingal, that have been published, confirm this observation in a considerable degree.

³ Young Mr. Tytler briskly stepped forward, and said, "Fingal is certainly genuine, for I have heard a great part of it repeated in the original." Dr. Johnson indignantly asked him, "Sir, do you understand the original?" TYTLER. "No, Sir." JOHNSON. "Why, then, we see to what *this* testimony comes : thus it is." He afterwards said to me, "Did you observe the wonderful confidence with which young Tytler advanced with his front ready *braced*?"—*First edit.*—C.

same kind of ready belief might be found in his own country. "He would undertake," he said, "to write an epic poem on the story of Robin Hood ; and half England, to whom the names and places he should mention in it are familiar, would believe and declare they had heard it from their earliest years."

One of his objections to the authenticity of Fingal, during the conversation at Ulinish, is omitted in my Journal, but I perfectly recollect it. "Why is not the original deposited in some public library, instead of exhibiting attestations of its existence? Suppose there were a question in a court of justice, whether a man be dead or alive. You aver he is alive, and you bring fifty witnesses to swear it. I answer, 'Why do you not produce the man?' " This is an argument founded on one of the first principles of the law of evidence, which Gilbert¹ would have held to be irrefragable.

I do not think it incumbent on me to give any precise decided opinion upon this question, as to which I believe more than some, and less than others. The subject appears to have now become very uninteresting to the public. That Fingal is not from beginning to end a translation from the Gaelic, but that *some* passages have been supplied by the editor to connect the whole, I have heard admitted by very warm advocates for its authenticity. If this be the case, why are not these distinctly ascertained? Antiquaries and admirers of the work may complain, that they are in a situation similar to that of the unhappy gentleman whose wife informed him, on her deathbed, that one of their reputed children was not his ; and, when he eagerly begged her to declare which of them it was, she answered, "*That* you shall never know," and expired, leaving him in irremediable doubt as to them all.

I beg leave now to say something upon second-sight, of which I have related two instances, as they impressed my mind at the time I own, I returned from the Hebrides with a considerable degree of faith in the many stories of that kind which I heard with a too easy acquiescence, without any close examination of the evidence : but, since that time, my belief in those stories has been much weakened, by reflecting on the careless inaccuracy of narrative in common

¹ Chief Baron Gilbert wrote a treatise on *Evidence*.—C.

matters, from which we may certainly conclude that there may be the same in what is more extraordinary. It is but just, however, to add, that the belief in the second-sight is not peculiar to the Highlands and Isles.

Some years after our Tour, a cause was tried in the court of session, where the principal fact to be ascertained was, whether a ship-master, who used to frequent the Western Highlands and Isles, was drowned in one particular year, or in the year after. A great number of witnesses from those parts were examined on each side, and swore directly contrary to each other upon this simple question. One of them, a very respectable chieftain, who told me a story of second-sight, which I have not mentioned, but which I too implicitly believed, had in this case, previous to this public examination, not only said, but attested under his hand, that he had seen the ship-master the year subsequent to that in which the court was finally satisfied he was drowned. When interrogated with the strictness of judicial inquiry, and under the awe of an oath, he recollected himself better, and retracted what he had formerly asserted, apologising for his inaccuracy, by telling the judges, "A man will *say* what he will not *swear*." By many he was much censured, and it was maintained, that every gentleman would be as attentive to truth without the sanction of an oath as with it. Dr. Johnson, though he himself was distinguished at all times by a scrupulous adherence to truth, controverted this proposition ; and, as a proof that this was not, though it ought to be, the case, urged the very different decisions of elections under Mr. Grenville's Act, from those formerly made, "Gentlemen will not pronounce upon oath, what they would have said, and voted in the house, without that sanction."

However difficult it may be for men who believe in preternatural communications, in modern times, to satisfy those who are of a different opinion, they may easily refute the doctrine of their opponents, who impute a belief in second-sight to superstition. To entertain a visionary notion that one sees a distant or future event may be called superstition ; but the correspondence of the fact or event with such an impression on the fancy, though certainly very wonderful, if proved, has no more connection with superstition than magnetism or electricity.

After dinner various topics were discussed; but I recollect only one particular. Dr. Johnson compared the different talents of Garrick and Foote, as companions, and gave Garrick greatly the preference for elegance, though he allowed Foote extraordinary powers of entertainment. He said, "Garrick is restrained by some principle; but Foote has the advantage of an unlimited range. Garrick has some delicacy of feeling: it is possible to put him out; you may get the better of him; but Foote is the most incompressible fellow that I ever knew; when you have driven him into a corner, and think you are sure of him, he runs through between your legs, or jumps over your head, and makes his escape."

Dr. Erskine and Mr. Robert Walker, two very respectable ministers of Edinburgh,¹ supped with us, as did the Rev. Dr. Webster. The conversation turned on the Moravian missions, and on the Methodists. Dr. Johnson observed in general, that missionaries were too sanguine in their accounts of their success among savages, and that much of what they tell is not to be believed. He owned that the Methodists had done good; had spread religious impressions among the vulgar part of mankind; but, he said, they had great bitterness against other Christians, and that he never could get a Methodist to explain in what he excelled others; that it always ended in the indispensable necessity of hearing one of their preachers.

Thursday, Nov. 11.—Principal Robertson came to us as we sat at breakfast; he advanced to Dr. Johnson, repeating a line of Virgil, which I forget. I suppose, either

"Post varios casus, per tot discrimina rerum,"²

OR

"—multum ille et terris jactatus, et alto."³

Everybody had accosted us with some studied compliment on our return. Dr. Johnson said, "I am really ashamed of the congratulations which we receive. We are addressed as if we had made a voyage to Nova Zembla, and suffered five persecutions in Japan."

¹ Dr. Erskine and Mr. Walker are the two clergymen described in *Guy Mannering*.

² Through various hazards and events we move.—DRYDEN.

³ Long labours both by sea and land he bore.—DRYDEN.

And he afterwards remarked, that "to see a man come up with a formal air, and a Latin line, when we had no fatigue and no danger was provoking." I told him, he was not sensible of the danger, having lain under cover in the boat during the storm : he was like the chicken, that hides its head under its wing, and then thinks itself safe.

Lord Elibank came to us, as did Sir William Forbes. The rash attempt in 1745 being mentioned, I observed, that it would make a fine piece of history.¹ Dr. Johnson said it would. Lord Elibank doubted whether any man of this age could give it impartially. JOHNSON. "A man, by talking with those of different sides, who were actors in it, and putting down all that he hears, may in time collect the materials of a good narrative. You are to consider, all history was at first oral. I suppose Voltaire was fifty years in collecting his 'Louis XIV.,' which he did in the way that I am proposing." ROBERTSON. "He did so. He lived much with all the great people who were concerned in that reign, and heard them talk of everything; and then either took Mr. Boswell's way of writing down what he heard, or, which is as good, preserved it in his memory; for he has a wonderful memory." With the leave, however, of this elegant historian, no man's memory can preserve facts or sayings with such fidelity as may be done by writing them down when they are recent. Dr. Robertson said, "It was now full time to make such a collection as Dr. Johnson suggested; for many of the people who were then in arms were dropping off; and both Whigs and Jacobites were now come to talk with moderation." Lord Elibank said to him, "Mr. Robertson, the first thing that gave me a high opinion of you was your saying in the Select Society,² while parties ran high, soon after the year 1745, that you did not think worse of a man's moral character for his having been in rebellion. This was

¹ It were to be wished that the master hand of Sir Walter Scott, which has created a European interest in the details of the Scottish character and manners, should give us a history of the Young Pretender's proceedings. Mr. Boswell's notes, the work called "Ascanius," the journals in the Lockhart papers, and the periodical publications of the day, contain a great deal of the prince's personal history; and the archives of the public offices and the Stuart papers would probably be open to his inquiries. There is perhaps little new to tell, but it might be collected into one view, and the interest heightened by his admirable powers of narration.—C. (1880).

² A society for debate in Edinburgh, consisting of the most eminent men.

venturing to utter a liberal sentiment, while both sides had a detestation of each other."

Dr. Johnson observed, that being in rebellion from a notion of another's right was not connected with depravity ; and that we had this proof of it, that all mankind applauded the pardoning of rebels ; which they would not do in the case of robbers and murderers. He said, with a smile, that " he wondered that the phrase of *unnatural* rebellion should be so much used, for that all rebellion was natural to man."

As I kept no Journal of anything that passed after this morning, I shall, from memory, group together this and the other days, till that on which Dr. Johnson departed for London. They were in all nine days ; on which he dined at Lady Colvill's, Lord Hailes's, Sir Adolphus Oughton's, Sir Alexander Dick's, Principal Robertson's, Mr. M'Laurin's, and thrice at Lord Elibank's seat in the country, where we also passed two nights. He supped at the Hon. Alexander Gordon's, now one of our judges, by the title of Lord Rockville ; at Mr. Nairne's, now also one of our judges, by the title of Lord Dunsinan ; at Dr. Blair's and Mr. Tytler's ; and at my house thrice, one evening with a numerous company, chiefly gentlemen of the law ; another with Mr. Menzies of Culdares, and Lord Monboddoo, who disengaged himself on purpose to meet him ; and the evening on which we returned from Lord Elibank's, he supped with my wife and me by ourselves.

He breakfasted at Dr. Webster's, at old Mr. Drummond's, and at Dr. Blacklock's ; and spent one forenoon at my uncle Dr. Boswell's, who showed him his curious museum ; and, as he was an elegant scholar, and a physician bred in the school of Boerhaave, Dr. Johnson was pleased with his company.

On the mornings when he breakfasted at my house, he had, from ten o'clock till one or two, a constant levee of various persons, of very different characters and descriptions. I could not attend him, being obliged to be in the court of session ; but my wife was so good as to devote the greater part of the morning to the endless task of pouring out tea for my friend and his visitors.

Such was the disposition of his time at Edinburgh. He said one evening to me, in a fit of languor, "Sir, we have been harassed by invitations." I acquiesced. "Ay, Sir," he replied; "but how much worse would it have been if we had been neglected?"

From what has been recorded in this Journal, it may well be supposed that a variety of admirable conversation has been lost, by my neglect to preserve it. I shall endeavor to recollect some of it as well as I can.

At Lady Colvill's, to whom I am proud to introduce any stranger of eminence, that he may see what dignity and grace is to be found in Scotland, an officer observed that he had heard Lord Mansfield was not a great English lawyer. JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, supposing Lord Mansfield not to have the splendid talents which he possesses, he must be a great English lawyer, from having been so long at the bar, and having passed through so many of the great offices of the law. Sir, you may as well maintain that a carrier, who has driven a packhorse between Edinburgh and Berwick for thirty years, does not know the road, as that Lord Mansfield does not know the law of England."

At Mr. Nairne's he drew the character of Richardson, the author of *Clarissa*, with a strong yet delicate pencil. I lament much that I have not preserved it: I only remember that he expressed a high opinion of his talents and virtues; but observed, that "his perpetual study was to ward off petty inconveniences, and procure petty pleasures; that his love of continual superiority was such that he took care to be always surrounded by women, who listened to him implicitly, and did not venture to controvert his opinions; and that his desire of distinction was so great, that he used to give large vails to Speaker Onslow's servants, that they might treat him with respect.

On the same evening, he would not allow that the private life of a judge, in England, was required to be so strictly decorous as I supposed. "Why then, Sir," said I, "according to your account, an English judge may just live like a gentleman." JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir,—if he *can*."

At Mr. Tytler's, I happened to tell that one evening, a great many years ago, when Dr. Hugh Blair and I were sitting together in the pit

of Drury-Lane playhouse, in a wild freak of youthful extravagance, I entertained the audience *prodigiously*, by imitating the lowing of a cow. A little while after I had told this story, I differed from Dr. Johnson, I suppose too confidently, upon some point, which I now forget. He did not spare me. "Nay, Sir," said he, "if you cannot talk better as a man, I'd have you bellow like a cow."¹

At Dr. Webster's, he said, that he believed hardly any man died without affectation. This remark appears to me to be well founded, and will account for many of the celebrated deathbed sayings which are recorded.

On one of the evenings at my house, when he told me that Lord Lovat boasted to an English nobleman that, though he had not his wealth, he had two thousand men whom he could at any time call into the field, the Hon. Alexander Gordon observed that those two thousand men brought him to the block. "True, Sir," said Dr. Johnson: "but you may just as well argue concerning a man who has fallen over a precipice to which he has walked too near,— 'His two legs brought him to that,' is he not the better for having two legs?"

At Dr. Blair's I left him, in order to attend a consultation, during which he and his amiable host were by themselves. I returned to supper, at which were Principal Robertson, Mr. Nairne, and some other gentlemen. Dr. Robertson and Dr. Blair, I remember, talked well upon subordination and government; and, as my friend and I were walking home, he said to me, "Sir, these two doctors are good men, and wise men." I begged of Dr. Blair to recollect what he could of the long conversation that passed between Dr. Johnson and him alone, this evening, and he obligingly wrote to me as follows:—

¹ As I have been scrupulously exact in relating anecdotes concerning other persons, I shall not withhold any part of this story, however ludicrous. I was so successful in this boyish frolic, that the universal cry of the galleries was, "*Encore the cow! Encore the cow!*" In the pride of my heart I attempted imitations of some other animals, but with very inferior effect. My reverend friend, anxious for my *fame*, with an air of the utmost gravity and earnestness, addressed me thus: "My dear Sir, I would *confin*e myself to the cow!"—Dr. Blair's advice was expressed more emphatically, and with a peculiar *bur*n—"Stick to the *cow* mon!"—WALTER SCOTT.

LETTER 165.

DR. BLAIR TO MR. BOSWELL.

"March 8, 1785.

"DEAR SIR,—As so many years have intervened since I chanced to have that conversation with Dr. Johnson in my house to which you refer, I have forgotten most of what then passed; but remember that I was both instructed and entertained by it. Among other subjects the discourse happening to turn on modern Latin poets, the doctor expressed a very favourable opinion of Buchanan, and instantly repeated, from beginning to end, an ode of his, entitled *Calendæ Maiæ* (the eleventh in his *Miscellaneorum Liber*), beginning with these words, '*Salvete sacris deliciis Sacræ*,' with which I had formerly been unacquainted; but upon perusing it, the praise which he bestowed upon it, as one of the happiest of Buchanan's poetical compositions, appeared to me very just. He also repeated to me a Latin ode he had composed in one of the Western Islands, from which he had lately returned. We had much discourse concerning his excursion to those islands, with which he expressed himself as having been highly pleased; talked in a favourable manner of the hospitality of the inhabitants; and particularly spoke much of his happiness in having you for his companion; and said that the longer he knew you, he loved and esteemed you the more. This conversation passed in the interval between tea and supper, when we were by ourselves. You, and the rest of the company who were with us at supper, have often taken notice that he was uncommonly bland and gay that evening, and gave much pleasure to all who were present. This is all that I can recollect distinctly of that long conversation. Yours sincerely,

"HUGH BLAIR."

At Lord Hailes's we spent a most agreeable day; but again I must lament that I was so indolent as to let almost all that passed evaporate into oblivion. Dr. Johnson observed there, that "it is wonderful how ignorant many officers of the army are, considering how much leisure they have for study, and the acquisition of knowledge." I hope he was mistaken; for he maintained that many of them were ignorant of things belonging immediately to their own profession; "for instance, many cannot tell how far a musket will carry a bullet;" in proof of which, I suppose, he mentioned some particular person, for Lord Hailes, from whom I solicited what he could recollect of that day, writes to me as follows:—

"As to Dr. Johnson's observation about the ignorance of officers, in the length that a musket will carry, my brother, Colonel Dalrymple, was present, and he thought that the doctor was either mistaken, by putting the question wrong, or that he had conversed on the subject with some person out of ser

vice. Was it upon that occasion that he expressed no curiosity to see the room at Dumfermline where Charles I. was born? 'I know that he was born,' said he; 'no matter where.' Did he envy us the birthplace of the king?"

Near the end of his "Journey," Dr. Johnson has given liberal praise to Mr. Braidwood's academy for the deaf and dumb.¹ When he visited it, a circumstance occurred which was truly characteristic of our great lexicographer. "Pray," said he, "can they pronounce any *long* words?" Mr. Braidwood informed him they could. Upon which Dr. Johnson wrote one of his *sesquipedalia verba*, which was pronounced by the scholars, and he was satisfied. My readers may perhaps wish to know what the word was; but I cannot gratify their curiosity. Mr. Braidwood told me it remained long in his school, but had been lost before I made my inquiry.²

Dr. Johnson one day visited the court of session. He thought he made of pleading there too vehement, and too much addressed to the passions of the judges. "This," said he, "is not the Areopagus."

At old Mr. Drummond's, Sir John Dalrymple quaintly said, the two noblest animals in the world were a Scotch Highlander and an English sailor. "Why, Sir," said Dr. Johnson, "I shall say nothing as to the Scotch Highlander; but as to the English sailor, I cannot agree with you." Sir John said he was generous in giving away his money. JOHNSON. "Sir, he throws away his money, without thought and without merit. I do not call a tree generous, that sheds its fruit at every breeze." Sir John having affected to com-

¹ "There is one subject of philosophical curiosity to be found in Edinburgh, which no other city has to show; a College of the Deaf and Dumb, who are taught to speak, to read, to write, and to practise arithmetic, by a gentleman whose name is Braidwood. It was pleasing to see one of the most desperate of human calamities capable of so much help: whatever enlarges hope will exalt courage; after having seen the deaf taught arithmetic, who would be afraid to cultivate the Hebrides?"—JOHNSON.

² One of the best critics of our age "does not wish to prevent the admirers of the incorrect and nerveless style, which generally prevailed for a century before Dr. Johnson's energetic writings were known, from enjoying the laugh that this story may produce, in which he is very ready to join them." He, however, requests me to observe, that "my friend very properly chose a *long* word on this occasion, not, it is believed, from any predilection for polysyllables (though he certainly had a due respect for them), but in order to put Mr. Braidwood's skill to the strictest test, and to try the efficacy of his instruction by the most difficult exertion of the organs of his pupils."—R. The critic was probably Dr. Blair.—WALTER SCOTT.

plain of the attacks made upon his "Memoirs," Dr. Johnson said, "Nay, Sir, do not complain. It is advantageous to an author, that his book should be attacked as well as praised. Fame is a shuttlecock. If it be struck only at one end of the room, it will soon fall to the ground. To keep it up, it must be struck at both ends." Often have I reflected on this since ; and instead of being angry at many of those who have written against me, have smiled to think that they were unintentionally subservient to my fame, by using a battle-dore to make me "*virum volitare per ora*."

At Sir Alexander Dick's, from that absence of mind to which every man is at times subject, I told in a blundering manner, Lady Eglintoune's complimentary adoption of Dr. Johnson as her son ; for I unfortunately stated that her ladyship adopted him as her son, in consequence of her having been married the year *after* he was born. Dr. Johnson instantly corrected me. Sir, don't you perceive that you are defaming the countess ? For supposing me to be her son, and that she was not married till the year after my birth, I must have been her *natural* son." A young lady¹ of quality, who was present, very handsomely said, " Might not the son have justified the fault ?" My friend was much flattered by this compliment, which he never forgot. When in more than ordinary spirits, and talking of his journey in Scotland, he has called to me, "Boswell, what was it that the young lady of quality said of me at Sir Alexander Dick's ?" Nobody will doubt that I was happy in repeating it.

My illustrious friend being now desirous to be again in the great theatre of life and animated exertion, took a place in the coach, which was to set out for London on Monday the 22d of November. Sir John Dalrymple pressed him to come on the Saturday before, to his house at Cranston, which being twelve miles from Edinburgh, upon the middle road to Newcastle (Dr. Johnson had come to Edinburgh by Berwick, and along the naked coast), it would make his journey easier, as the coach would take him up at a more seasonable hour than that at which it sets out. Sir John, I perceived, was ambitious of having such a guest ; but as I was well assured, that

¹ Probably one of the Ladies Lindsay, daughters of the Earl of Balcarres.—WALTER SCOTT
[One of these, Lady Anne Lindsay, wrote the beautiful ballad of *Auld Robin Gray*.]

at this very time he had joined with some of his prejudiced countrymen in railing at Dr. Johnson, and had said, he wondered how any gentleman of Scotland could keep company with him, I thought he did not deserve the honour ; yet, as it might be a convenience to Dr. Johnson, I contrived that he should accept the invitation, and engaged to conduct him. I resolved that, on our way to Sir John's, we should make a little circuit by Roslin Castle and Hawthornden, and wished to set out soon after breakfast ; but young Mr. Tytler came to show Dr. Johnson some essays which he had written ; and my great friend, who was exceedingly obliging when thus consulted, was detained so long, that it was, I believe, one o'clock before we got into our post-chaise. I found that we should be too late for dinner at Sir John Dalrymple's, to which we were engaged ; but I would by no means lose the pleasure of seeing my friend at Hawthornden—of seeing *Sam Johnson* at the very spot where *Ben Jonson* visited the learned and poetical Drummond.

We surveyed Roslin Castle, the romantic scene around it, and the beautiful Gothic chapel, and dined and drank tea at the inn ; after which we proceeded to Hawthornden, and viewed the caves ; and I all the while had *Rare Ben* in my mind, and was pleased to think that this place was now visited by another celebrated wit of England.

By this time "the waning night was growing old," and we were yet several miles from Sir John Dalrymple's. Dr. Johnson did not seem much troubled at our having treated the baronet with so little attention to politeness ; but when I talked of the grievous disappointment it must have been to him that we did not come to the *feast* that he had prepared for us (for he told us he had killed & seven-year-old sheep on purpose), my friend got into a merry mood, and jocularly said, "I dare say, Sir, he has been very sadly distressed ; nay, we do not know but the consequence may have been fatal. Let me try to describe his situation in his own historical style I have as good a right to make him think and talk, as he has to tell us how people thought and talked a hundred years ago, of which he has no evidence. All history, so far as it is not supported by contemporary evidence, is romance.—Stay now—let us consider !" He then (heartily laughing all the while) proceeded in his imitation, I

am sure to the following effect, though now, at the distance of almost twelve years, I cannot pretend to recollect all the precise words.

“Dinner being ready, he wondered that his guests were not yet come. His wonder was soon succeeded by impatience. He walked about the room in anxious agitation; sometimes he looked at his watch, sometimes he looked out at the window with an eager gaze of expectation, and revolved in his mind the various accidents of human life. His family beheld him with mute concern. ‘Surely,’ said he, with a sigh, ‘they will not fail me.’ The mind of man can bear a certain pressure; but there is a point when it can bear no more. A rope was in his view, and he died a Roman death.”¹

It was very late before we reached the seat of Sir John Dalrymple, who, certainly with some reason, was not in very good humour. Our conversation was not brilliant. We supped, and went to bed in ancient rooms, which would have better suited the climate of Italy in summer, than that of Scotland in the month of November.

I recollect no conversation of the next day worth preserving, except one saying of Dr. Johnson, which will be a valuable text for many decent old dowagers, and other good company, in various circles to descant upon. He said, “I am sorry I have not learnt to play at cards. It is very useful in life: it generates kindness, and consolidates society.” He certainly could not mean deep play.

My friend and I thought we should be more comfortable at the inn at Blackshields, two miles farther on. We therefore went thither in the evening, and he was very entertaining; but I have preserved nothing but the pleasing remembrance, and his verses on George the Second and Cibber, and his epitaph on Parnell, which he was then so good as to dictate to me. We breakfasted together next morning, and then the coach came, and took him up. He had, as one of his companions in it, as far as Newcastle, the worthy and ingenious Dr. Hope, botanical professor at Edinburgh. Both Dr. Johnson and he used to speak of their good fortune in thus accident-

¹ Essex was at that time confined to the same chamber of the Tower from which his father Lord Capel had been led to death, and in which his wife's grandfather had inflicted a voluntary leath upon himself. When he saw his friend carried to what he reckoned certain fate, their common enemies enjoying the spectacle, and reflected that it was he who had forced Lord Howard upon the confidence of Russell, he retired, and by a *Roman death*, put an end to his misery.”—*Dalrymple's Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 86.

ally meeting; for they had much instructive conversation, which is always a most valuable enjoyment, and, when found where it is not expected, is peculiarly relished.

I have now completed my account of our Tour to the Hebrides. I have brought Dr. Johnson down to Scotland, and seen him into the coach which in a few hours carried him back into England. He said to me often, that the time he spent in this Tour was the pleasantest part of his life, and asked me if I would lose the recollection of it for five hundred pounds. I answered I would not; and he applauded my setting such a value on an accession of new images in my mind.

Had it not been for me, I am persuaded Dr. Johnson never would have undertaken such a journey; and I must be allowed to assume some merit from having been the cause that our language has been enriched with such a book as that which he published on his return; a book which I never read but with the utmost admiration, as I had such opportunities of knowing from what very meagre materials it was composed.

But my praise may be supposed partial; and therefore I shall insert two testimonies, not liable to that objection, both written by gentlemen of Scotland, to whose opinions I am confident the highest respect will be paid, Lord Hailes and Mr. Dempster.

LETTER 166.

LORD HAILES TO MR. BOSWELL.

"Newhalles, Feb. 6, 1775.

"SIR,—I have received much pleasure and much instruction from perusing the 'Journey to the Hebrides.' I admire the elegance and variety of description, and the lively picture of men and manners. I always approve of the moral, often of the political reflections. I love the benevolence of the author.

"They who search for faults may possibly find them in this, as well as in every other work of literature. For example, the friends of the old family say that the *era of planting* is placed too late, at the union of the two kingdoms. I am known to be no friend of the old family; yet I would place the era of planting at the restoration; after the murder of Charles I. had been expiated in the anarchy which succeeded it.

"Before the restoration, few trees were planted, unless by the monastic drones: their successors (and worthy patriots they were), the barons, first cut down the trees, and then sold the estates. The gentleman at St. Andrews, who said that there were but two trees in Fife, ought to have added, that the

elms of Balmerino were sold within these twenty years, to make pumps for the fire-engines.

"In J. Major *de Gestis Scotorum*, l. i. c. 2, last edition, there is a singular passage :—

"Davidi Cranstoneo conteraneo, dum de prima theologiæ licentia foret, duo ei consocii et familiares, et mei cum eo in artibus auditores, scilicet Jacobus Almain Senonensis, et Petrus Bruxcellensis, Prædicatoris ordinis, in Sorbonæ curia die Sorbonico commilitonibus suis publice objecerunt, *quod panis avenaceo plebei Scoti*, sicut a quodam religioso intellexerant, *vescebantur, ut virum, quem cholericum noverant, honestis salibus tentarent, qui hoc inficiari tanquam patriæ dedecus nisus est.*"

"Pray introduce our countryman, Mr. Licentiate David Cranston, to the acquaintance of Mr. Johnson.

"The syllogism seems to have been this :—

They who feed on oatmeal are barbarian ;
But the Scots fed on oatmeal :—Ergo.

The licentiate denied the *minor*. I am, Sir, &c.,

"DAV. DALRYMPLE."

LETTER 167.

MR. DEMPSTER TO MR. BOSWELL.

"Dunnichen, Feb. 16, 1775.

"MY DEAR BOSWELL,—I cannot omit a moment to return you my best thanks for the entertainment you have furnished me, my family, and guests, by the perusal of Dr. Johnson's 'Journey to the Western Islands;' and now for my sentiments of it. I was well entertained. His descriptions are accurate and vivid. He carried me on the tour along with him. I am pleased with the justice he has done to your humour and vivacity. 'The noise of the wind being all its own,' is a *bon-mot*, that it would have been a pity to have omitted, and a robbery not to have ascribed to its author.¹

"There is nothing in the book, from beginning to end, that a Scotchman need to take amiss. What he says of the country is true, and his observations on the people are what must naturally occur to a sensible, observing, and reflecting inhabitant of a *convenient* metropolis, where a man on thirty pounds a year may be better accommodated with all the little wants of life than Col or Sir Allan. He reasons candidly about the second-sight; but I wish he had inquired more, before he ventured to say he even doubted of the possibility of such an unusual and useless deviation from all the known laws of nature. The notion of the second-sight I consider as a remnant of superstitious ignorance and credulity, which a philosopher will set down as such, till the contrary is

¹ "I know not that I ever heard the wind so loud in any other place [as in Col]; and Mr Boswell observed, that its noise *was all its own*, for there were no trees to increase it."—*Johnson's Journey*.—C.

clearly proved, and then it will be classed among the other certain, though unaccountable parts of our nature, like dreams, and—I do not know what.

“In regard to the language, it has the merit of being all his own. Many words of foreign extraction are used, where I believe, common ones would do as well, especially on familiar occasions. Yet I believe he could not express himself so forcibly in any other style. I am charmed with his researches concerning the Erse language, and the antiquity of their manuscripts. I am quite convinced; and I shall rank Ossian, and his Fingals and Oscars, amongst the nursery tales, not the true history of our country, in all time to come.

“Upon the whole the book cannot displease, for it has no pretensions. The author neither says he is a geographer, nor an antiquarian, nor very learned in the History of Scotland, nor a naturalist, nor a fossilist. The manners of the people, and the face of the country, are all he attempts to describe, or seems to have thought of. Much were it to be wished that they who have travelled into more remote, and of course more curious, regions, had all possessed his good sense. Of the state of learning his observations on Glasgow university show he has formed a very sound judgment. He understands our climate too, and he has accurately observed the changes, however slow and imperceptible to us, which Scotland has undergone, in consequence of the blessings of liberty and internal peace. I could have drawn my pen through the story of the old woman at St. Andrews’s, being the only silly thing in the book. He has taken the opportunity of ingrafting into the work several good observations, which I dare say he had made upon men and things before he set foot on Scotch ground, by which it is considerably enriched.¹ A long journey, like a tall may-pole, though not very beautiful itself, yet is pretty enough when ornamented with flowers and garlands; it furnishes a sort of cloak-pins for hanging the furniture of your mind upon; and whoever sets out upon a journey, without furnishing his mind previously with much study and useful knowledge, erects a may-pole in December, and puts up very useless cloak-pins.

“I hope the book will induce many of his countrymen to make the same jaunt, and help to intermix the more liberal part of them still more with us, and perhaps abate somewhat of that virulent antipathy which many of them entertain against the Scotch; who certainly would never have formed those combinations which he takes notice of, more than their ancestors, had they not been necessary for their mutual safety, at least for their success, in a country where they are treated as foreigners. They would find us not deficient, at least in a point of hospitality, and they would be ashamed ever after to abuse us in the mass.

“So much for the Tour. I have now, for the first time in my life, passed a winter in the country; and never did three months roll on with more swift-

¹ Mr. Orme, one of the ablest historians of this age, is of the same opinion. He said to me, “There are in that book thoughts which, by long revolution in the great mind of Johnson, have been formed and polished—like pebbles rolled in the ocean.”

ness and satisfaction. I used not only to wonder at, but pity, those whose lot condemned them to winter anywhere but in either of the capitals. But every place has its charms to a cheerful mind. I am busy planting and taking measures for opening the summer campaign in farming; and I find I have an excellent resource, when revolutions in politics perhaps, and revolutions of the sun for certain, will make it decent for me to retreat behind the ranks of the more forward in life.

"I am glad to hear the last was a very busy week with you. I see you as counsel in some causes which must have opened a charming field for your humorous vein. As it is more uncommon, so I verily believe it is more useful than the more serious exercises of reason; and, to a man who is to appear in public, more éclat is to be gained, sometimes more money too, by a *bon-mot*, than a learned speech. It is the fund of natural humour which Lord North possesses, that makes him so much the favourite of the house, and so able, because so amiable, a leader of a party.

"I have now finished *my Tour of Seven Pages*. In what remains, I beg leave to offer my compliments, and those of *ma très chère femme*, to you and Mrs. Boswell. Pray unbend the busy brow, and frolic a little in a letter to, my dear Boswell, your affectionate friend,

"GEORGE DEMPSTER." ¹

I shall also present the public with a correspondence with the laird of Rasay, concerning a passage in the "Journey to the Western Islands," which shows Dr. Johnson in a very amiable light.

LETTER 168. THE LAIRD OF RASAY TO MR. BOSWELL.

"Rasay, April 10, 1775.

"DEAR SIR,—I take this occasion of returning you my most hearty thanks for the civilities shown to my daughter by you and Mrs. Boswell. Yet, though she has informed me that I am under this obligation, I should very probably have deferred troubling you with making my acknowledgments at present, if I had not seen Dr. Johnson's 'Journey to the Western Isles,' in which he has been pleased to make a very friendly mention of my family, for which I am surely obliged to him, as being more than an equivalent for the reception you and he met with. Yet there is one paragraph I should have been glad he had omitted, which I am sure was owing to misinformation; that is, that I had acknowledged Macleod to be my chief, though my ancestors disputed the pre-eminence for a long tract of time.

¹ Every reader will, I am sure, join with me in warm admiration of the truly patriotic writer of this letter. I knew not which most to applaud,—that good sense and liberality of mind which could see and admit the defects of his native country, to which no man is a more zealous friend; or that candour which induced him to give just praise to the minister whom he honestly and strenuously opposed.

"I never had occasion to enter seriously on this argument with the present laird, or his grandfather, nor could I have any temptation to such a renunciation from either of them. I acknowledge the benefit of being chief of a clan is in our days of very little significance, and to trace out the progress of this honour to the founder of a family, of any standing, would perhaps be a matter of some difficulty.

"The true state of the present case is this:—the M'Leod family consists of two different branches; the M'Leods of Lewis, of which I am descended, and the M'Leods of Harris. And though the former have lost a very extensive estate by forfeiture in King James the Sixth's time, there are still several respectable families of it existing, who would justly blame me for such an unmeaning cession, when they all acknowledge me head of that family; which, though in fact it be but an ideal point of honour, is not hitherto so far disregarded in our country, but it would determine some of my friends to look on me as a much smaller man than either they or myself judge me at present to be. I will, therefore, ask it as a favour of you to acquaint the Doctor with the difficulty he has brought me to. In travelling among rival clans, such a silly tale as this might easily be whispered into the ear of a passing stranger; but as it has no foundation in fact, I hope the Doctor will be so good as to take his own way in undeceiving the public—I principally mean my friends and connexions, who will be first angry at me, and next sorry to find such an instance of my littleness recorded in a book which has a very fair chance of being much read. I expect you will let me know what he will write you in return, and we here beg to make offer to you and Mrs. Boswell of our most respectful compliments.—I am, dear Sir, your most obedient humble servant,

"JOHN M'LEOD."

LETTER 169. MR. BOSWELL TO THE LAIRD OF RASAY.

"London, May 8, 1778.

"DEAR SIR,—The day before yesterday I had the honour to receive your letter, and I immediately communicated it to Dr. Johnson. He said he loved your spirit, and was exceedingly sorry that he had been the cause of the smallest uneasiness to you. There is not a more candid man in the world than he is, when properly addressed, as you will see from his letter to you, which I now inclose. He has allowed me to take a copy of it, and he says you may read it to your clan, or publish it, if you please. Be assured, Sir, that I shall take care of what he has intrusted to me, which is to have an acknowledgment of his error inserted in the Edinburgh newspapers. You will, I dare say, be fully satisfied with Dr Johnson's behaviour. He is desirous to know that you are; and therefore when you have read his acknowledgment in the papers, I beg you may write to me; and if you choose it, I am persuaded a letter from you to the Doctor also will be taken kind. I shall be at Edinburgh the week after next.

"Any civilities which my wife and I had in our power to show to your daughter, Miss M'Leod, were due to her own merit, and were well repaid by her agreeable company. But I am sure I should be a very unworthy man if I did not wish to show a grateful sense of the hospitable and genteel manner in which you were pleased to treat me. Be assured, my dear Sir, that I shall never forget your goodness, and the happy hours which I spent in Rasay.

"You and Dr. M'Leod were both so obliging as to promise me an account in writing, of all the particulars which each of you remember, concerning the transactions of 1745-6. Pray do not forget this, and be as minute and full as you can; put down everything; I have a great curiosity to know as much as I can, authentically.

"I beg that you may present my best respects to Lady Rasay, my compliments to your young family, and to Dr. M'Leod; and my hearty good wishes to Malcolm, with whom I hope again to shake hands cordially.—I have the honour to be, dear Sir, your obliged and faithful humble servant,

"JAMES BOSWELL."

ADVERTISEMENT WRITTEN BY DR. JOHNSON,

And inserted by his desire in the Edinburgh newspapers, referred to in the foregoing letter.¹

"The author of the 'Journey to the Western Islands,' having related that the M'Leods of Rasay acknowledge the chieftainship or superiority of the M'Leods of Sky, finds that he has been misinformed or mistaken. He means in a future edition to correct his error, and wishes to be told of more, if more have been discovered."

Dr. Johnson's letter was as follows :—

LETTER 170. DR. JOHNSON TO THE LAIRD OF RASAY.

London, May 6, 1775.

"DEAR SIR,—Mr. Boswell has this day shown me a letter in which you complain of a passage in the 'Journey to the Hebrides.' My meaning is mistaken. I did not intend to say that you had personally made any cession of the rights of your house, or any acknowledgment of the superiority of M'Leod of Dunvegan. I only designed to express what I thought generally admitted—that the house of Rasay allowed the superiority of the house of Dunvegan. Even this I now find to be erroneous, and will therefore omit or retract it in the next edition.

"Though what I had said had been true, if it had been disagreeable to you, I should have wished it unsaid; for it is not my business to adjust precedence. As it is mistaken, I find myself disposed to correct, both by my respect for you, and my reverence for truth.

¹ The original MS. is now in my possession.

"As I know not when the book will be reprinted, I have desired Mr. Boswell to anticipate the correction in the Edinburgh papers. This is all that can be done.

"I hope I may now venture to desire that my compliments may be made, and my gratitude expressed, to Lady Rasay, Mr. Malcolm Macleod, Mr. Donald M'Queen, and all the gentlemen and all the ladies whom I saw in the island of Rasay; a place which I remember with too much pleasure and too much kindness, not to be sorry that my ignorance, or hasty persuasion, should, for a single moment, have violated its tranquillity.

"I beg you all to forgive an undesigned and involuntary injury, and to consider me as, Sir, your most obliged and most humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."¹

It would be improper for me to boast of my own labours; but I cannot refrain from publishing such praise as I received from such a man as Sir William Forbes, of Pitsligo, after the perusal of the original manuscript of my Journal.

LETTER 171.

SIR W. FORBES TO MR. BOSWELL.

"Edinburgh, March 7, 1777.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I ought to have thanked you sooner for your very obliging letter, and for the singular confidence you are pleased to place in me, when you trust me with such a curious and valuable deposit as the papers you have sent me.² Be assured I have a due sense of this favour, and shall faithfully and carefully return them to you. You may rely that I shall neither copy any part, nor permit the papers to be seen.

"They contain a curious picture of society, and form a journal on the most instructive plan that can possibly be thought of; for I am not sure that an ordinary observer would become so well acquainted either with Dr. Johnson, or with the manners of the Hebrides, by a personal intercourse, as by a perusal of your Journal. I am very truly, dear Sir, &c.

"WILLIAM FORBES."

When I consider how many of the persons mentioned in this Tour are now gone to "that undiscovered country, from whose bourne

¹ Rasay was highly gratified, and afterwards visited and dined with Dr. Johnson, at his house in London.

² In justice both to Sir William Forbes and myself, it is proper to mention, that the papers which were submitted to his perusal contained only an account of our Tour from the time that Dr. Johnson and I set out from Edinburgh, and consequently did not contain the eulogium on Sir William Forbes (page 179), which he never saw till this book appeared in print; nor did he even know, when he wrote the above letter, that this Journal was to be published.

no traveller returns," I feel an impression at once awful and tender—*Requiescant in pace!*

It may be objected by some persons, as it has been by one of my friends, that he who has the power of thus exhibiting an exact transcript of conversations is not a desirable member of society. I repeat the answer which I made to that friend: "Few, very few, need be afraid that their sayings will be recorded. Can it be imagined that I would take the trouble to gather what grows on every hedge, because I have collected such fruits as the *Nonpareil* and the *BON CHRETIEN*?"

On the other hand, how useful is such a faculty, if well exercised. To it we owe all those interesting apophthegms and *memorabilia* of the ancients, which Plutarch, Xenophon, and Valerius Maximus, have transmitted to us. To it we owe all those instructive and entertaining collections which the French have made under the title of "*Ana*," affixed to some celebrated name. To it we owe the "*Table Talk*" of Selden, the "*Conversation*" between Ben Jonson and Drummond of Hawthornden, Spence's "*Anecdotes of Pope*," and other valuable remains in our own language. How delighted should we have been, if thus introduced into the company of Shakespeare and of Dryden, of whom we know scarcely any thing but their admirable writings! What pleasure would it have given us, to have known their petty habits, their characteristic manners, their modes of composition, and their genuine opinion of preceding writers and of their contemporaries? All these are now irrecoverably lost. Considering how many of the strongest and most brilliant effusions of exalted intellect must have perished, how much is it to be regretted that all men of distinguished wisdom and wit have not been attended by friends, of taste enough to relish, and abilities enough to register their conversation:

"Vixere fortes ante Agamemnona
Multi, sed omnes illacrymabiles
Urgentur, ignotique longa
Nocte, carent quia vate sacro."

They whose inferior exertions are recorded, as serving to explain & illustrate the sayings of such men, may be proud of being thus

associated, and of their names being transmitted to posterity, by being appended to an illustrious character.

Before I conclude, I think it proper to say, that I have suppressed¹ every thing which I thought could really hurt any one now living. Vanity and self-conceit indeed may sometimes suffer. With respect to what is related, I considered it my duty to "extenuate nothing, nor set down aught in malice;" and with those lighter strokes of Dr. Johnson's satire, proceeding from a warmth and quickness of imagination, not from any malevolence of heart, and which, on account of their excellence, could not be omitted, I trust that they who are the subject of them have good sense and good temper enough not to be displeased.

I have only to add, that I shall ever reflect with great pleasure on a Tour, which has been the means of preserving so much of the enlightened and instructive conversation of one whose virtues will, I hope, ever be an object of imitation, and whose powers of mind were so extraordinary, that ages may revolve before such a man shall again appear.

¹ Having found, on a revision of the first edition of this work, that, notwithstanding my best care, a few observations had escaped me, which arose from the instant impression, the publication of which might perhaps be considered as passing the bounds of a strict decorum, I immediately ordered that they should be omitted in the subsequent editions. I was pleased to find that they did not amount in the whole to a page. If any of the same kind are yet left, it is owing to inadvertence alone, no man being more unwilling to give pain to others than I am. A contemptible scribbler, of whom I have learned no more than that, after having disgraced and deserted the clerical character, he picks up in London a scanty livelihood by scurrilous lampoons under a feigned name, has impudently and falsely asserted that the passages omitted were *defamatory*, and that the omission was not voluntary, but compulsory. The last insinuation I took the trouble publicly to disprove; yet, like one of Pope's dunces, he persevered in "the lie o'erthrown." As to the charge of defamation, there is an obvious and certain mode of refuting it. Any person who thinks it worth while to compare one edition with the other will find that the passages omitted were not in the least degree of that nature, but exactly such as I have represented them in the former part, of this note, the hasty effusion of momentary feelings, which the delicacy of politeness should have suppressed.—B.

I believe the scribbler alluded to was William Thompson, author of the "Man in the Moon," and other satirical novels, half clever, half crazy kind of works. He was once a member of the kirk of Scotland, but being deposed by the presbytery of Auchterarder, became an author of all works in London, and could seldom finish a work, on whatever subject, without giving a slap by the way to that same presbytery with the unpronounceable name. Boswell's denial of having retracted *upon compulsion*, refutes what was said by Peter Pindar and others about "M'Donald's rage."—WALTER SCOTT.

His stay in Scotland was from the 18th of August, on which day he arrived, till the 22d of November, when he set out on his return to London ; and I believe ninety-four days were never passed by any man in a more vigorous exertion. He came by the way of Berwick-upon-Tweed to Edinburgh, where he remained a few days, and then went by St. Andrew's, Aberdeen, Inverness, and Fort Augustus, to the Hebrides, to visit which was the principal object he had in view. He visited the isles of Sky, Rasay, Col, Mull, Inchkenneth, and Icolmkill. He travelled through Argyshire by Inverary, and from thence by Lochlomond and Dunbarton to Glasgow, then by Loudon to Auchinleck in Ayrshire, the seat of my family, and then by Hamilton, back to Edinburgh, where he again spent some time.

He thus saw the four universities of Scotland, its three principal cities, and as much of the Highland and insular life as was sufficient for his philosophical contemplation. I had the pleasure of accompanying him during the whole of his journey.¹

He was respectfully entertained by the great, the learned, and the elegant, wherever he went ; nor was he less delighted with the hospitality which he experienced in humbler life.²

His various adventures, and the force and vivacity of his mind, as exercised during this peregrination, upon innumerable topics, have been faithfully, and to the best of my abilities, displayed in my "Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides," to which, as the public has been pleased to honour it by a very extensive circulation, I beg leave to refer, as to a separate and remarkable portion of his life, which may be there seen in detail, and which exhibits as striking a view of his powers in conversation, as his works do of his excel-

¹ The author was not a small gainer by this extraordinary Journey ; for Dr. Johnson thus writes to Mrs. Thrale, Nov. 8, 1778 :—"Boswell will praise my resolution and perseverance, and I shall in return celebrate his good humour and perpetual cheerfulness. He has better faculties than I had imagined ; more justness of discernment, and more fecundity of images. It is very convenient to travel with him ; for there is no house where he is not received with kindness and respect." Let. 90.—MALONE. I asked Lord Stowell in what estimation he found Boswell amongst his countrymen. "Generally liked as a good-natured jolly fellow," replied his lordship. "But was he *respected* ?" "Why, I think he had about the proportion of *respect* that you might guess would be shown to a *jolly fellow*." His lordship evidently thought that there was more *regard* than *respect*.—C.

² He was long remembered amongst the lower order of Hebrideans by the title of the *Sas senach More*, the *big Englishman*.—WALTER SCOTT.

lence in writing. Nor can I deny to myself the very flattering gratification of inserting here the character which my friend Mr Courtenay has been pleased to give that work.

“With Reynolds’ pencil, vivid, bold, and true,
 So fervent Boswell gives him to our view:
 In every trait we see his mind expand;
 The master rises by the pupil’s hand;
 We love the writer, praise his happy vein,
 Graced with the naïveté of the sage Montaigne;
 Hence not alone are brighter parts display’d,
 But e’en the specks of character pourtray’d:
 We see the Rambler with fastidious smile
 Mark the lone tree, and note the heath-clad isle;
 But when the heroic tale of ‘Flora’¹ charms,
 Deck’d in a kilt, he wields a chieftain’s arms;
 The tuneful piper sounds a martial strain,
 And Samuel sings, ‘The king shall have his *ain*.’”

During his stay at Edinburgh, after his return from the Hebrides, he was at great pains to obtain information concerning Scotland; and it will appear from his subsequent letters, that he was not less solicitous for intelligence on this subject after his return to London.

LETTER 172.

TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

“Nov. 27, 1778.

“DEAR SIR,—I came home last night, without any incommodity, danger, or weariness, and am ready to begin a new journey. I shall go to Oxford on Monday. I know Mrs. Boswell wished me well to go;² her wishes have not been disappointed. Mrs. Williams has received Sir A.’s³ letter.

¹ “The celebrated Flora Macdonald.”—COURTENAY.

² In this he showed a very acute penetration. My wife paid him the most assiduous and respectful attention while he was our guest; so that I wonder how he discovered her wishing for his departure. The truth is, that his irregular hours and uncouth habits, such as turning the candles with their heads downwards, when they did not burn bright enough, and letting the wax drop upon the carpet, could not but be disagreeable to a lady. Besides, she had not that high admiration of him which was felt by most of those who knew him; and, what was very natural to a female mind, she thought he had too much influence over her husband. She once, in a little warmth, made, with more point than justice, this remark upon that subject:—“I have seen many a bear led by a man; but I never before saw a man led by a bear.”—B. The reader will, however, hereafter see that the repetition of this observation as to Mrs. Boswell’s feelings towards him was made so frequently and pertinaciously, as is hardly reconcilable with good taste and good manners.—O.

³ Sir Alexander Gordon, one of the professors at Aberdeen.

"Make my compliments to all those to whom my compliments may be welcome. Let the box¹ be sent as soon as it can, and let me know when to expect it.

"Inquire, if you can, the order of the clans; Macdonald is first;² Maclean second; further I cannot go. Quicken Dr. Webster.³ I am, Sir, yours affectionately,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 173.

FROM MR. BOSWELL.

"Edinburgh, Dec. 2, 1778.

. . . . "You shall have what information I can procure as to the order of the clans. A gentleman of the name of Grant tells me that there is no settled order among them; and he says that the Macdonalds were not placed upon the right of the army at Culloden; the Stuarts were. I shall, however, examine witnesses of every name that I can find here. Dr. Webster shall be quickened too. I like your little memorandums; they are symptoms of your being in earnest with your book of northern travels.

"Your box shall be sent next week by sea. You will find in it some pieces of the broom-bush which you saw growing on the old castle of Auchinleck. The wood has a curious appearance when sawn across. You may either have a little writing-standish made of it, or get it formed into boards for a treatise on witchcraft, by way of a suitable binding."

LETTER 174.

FROM MR. BOSWELL.

"Edinburgh, Dec. 18, 1778.

. . . . "You promised me an inscription for a print to be taken from an historical picture of Mary Queen of Scots being forced to resign her crown, which Mr. Hamilton at Rome has painted for me. The two following have been sent to me:—

"*'Maria Scotorum Regina meliori seculo digna, jus regium civibus seditionis invitata resignat.'*

¹ This was a box containing a number of curious things which he had picked up in Scotland, particularly some horn-spoons.

² The Macdonalds always laid claim to be placed on the right of the whole clans, and those of that tribe assign the breach of this order at Culloden as one cause of the loss of the day. The Macdonalds, placed on the left wing, refused to charge, and positively left the field unsailed and unbroken. Lord George Murray in vain endeavoured to urge them on by saying, that their behaviour would make the left the right, and that he himself would take the name of Macdonald. On this subject there are some curious notices, in a very interesting journal written by one of the *seven men* of Moidart, as they were called—Macdonalds of the Clanronald sept, who were the first who declared for the prince at his landing in their chief's country. It is in the Lockhart papers, vol. ii. p. 510.—WALTER SCOTT.

³ The Rev. Dr. Alexander Webster, one of the ministers of Edinburgh, a man of distinguished abilities, who had promised him information concerning the Highlands and Islands of Scotland.—B.

“*Cives seditiosi Mariam Scotorum Reginam sese muneri abdicare invitam cogunt.*”

“Be so good as to read the passage in Robertson, and see if you cannot give me a better inscription. I must have it both in Latin and English; so if you should not give me another Latin one, you will at least choose the best of these two, and send a translation of it.” . . .

His humane and forgiving disposition was put to a pretty strong test on his return to London by a liberty which Mr. Thomas Davies had taken with him in his absence, which was, to publish two volumes entitled “Miscellaneous and Fugitive Pieces,” which he advertised in the newspapers, “By the Author of the Rambler.” In this collection, several of Dr. Johnson’s acknowledged writings, several of his anonymous performances, and some which he had written for others, were inserted; but there were also some in which he had no concern whatever. He was at first very angry, as he had good reason to be. But upon consideration of his poor friend’s narrow circumstances, and that he had only a little profit in view, and meant no harm, he soon relented, and continued his kindness to him as formerly.¹

In the course of his self-examination with retrospect to this year, he seems to have been much dejected; for he says, 1st January, 1774: “This year has passed with so little improvement, that I doubt whether I have not rather impaired than increased my learning.” And yet we have seen how he *read*, and we know how he *talked* during that period.

LETTER 175.

TO MRS. MONTAGU.

“Jan. 11, 1774.

“MADAM,—Having committed one fault by inadvertency, I will not commit another by sullenness. When I had the honor of your card, I could not comply with your invitation, and must now suffer the shame of confessing that the necessity of an answer did not come into my mind.

¹ “When Davies printed the *Fugitive Pieces* without his knowledge or consent; ‘How,’ said I, ‘would Pope have raved, had he been served so?’ ‘We should never,’ replied Johnson, ‘have heard the last on’t, to be sure; but then Pope was a narrow man. I will, however,’ added he, ‘storm and bluster *myself* a little this time;’—so went to London in all the wrath he could muster up. At his return, I asked him how the affair ended:—‘Why,’ said he, ‘I was a fierce fellow, and pretended to be very angry, and Thomas was a good-natured fellow, and pretended to be very sorry; so *there* the matter ended. I believe the dog loves me dearly. Mr. Thrale (turning round to my husband), what shall you and I do that is good for Tom Davies? We will do something for him to be sure.’”—PROZEL.

"This omission, Madam, you may easily excuse, as the consciousness of your own character must secure you from suspecting that the favour of your notice can ever miss a suitable return, but from ignorance or thoughtlessness; and to be ignorant of your eminence is not easy, but to him who lives out of the reach of the public voice.— I am, Madam, your most obedient and most humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

CHAPTER II.

1774.

Letters to Boswell, &c.—Religious Festivals and Pilgrimages—Death of Goldsmith—Greek Epitaph—Diary of a Tour into Wales—Chatsworth—Dovedale—Keddleston—Derby—Combermere—Hawkestone—Chester—St. Asaph—Denbigh—Holywell—Rhudlan Castle—Penmaen-Mawr—Bangor—Caernarvon—Bodville—Conway Castle—Ombersley—Hagley—The Leasowes—Blenheim—Beaconsfield.

HE was now seriously engaged in writing an account of our travels in the Hebrides, in consequence of which I had the pleasure of a more frequent correspondence with him.

LETTER 176.

TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"Jan. 29, 1774.

"DEAR SIR,—My operations have been hindered by a cough; at least I flatter myself, that if my cough had not come, I should have been further advanced. But I have had no intelligence from Dr. Webster, nor from the excise-office, nor from you. No account of the little borough.¹ Nothing of the Erse language. I have yet heard nothing of my box. You must make haste and gather me all you can; and do it quickly, or I will and shall do without it.

"Make my compliments to Mrs. Boswell, and tell her I do not love her the less for wishing me away. I gave her trouble enough, and shall be glad, in recompense to give her any pleasure.

"I would send some porter into the Hebrides, if I knew which way it could be got to my kind friends there. Inquire, and let me know.

"Make my compliments to all the doctors of Edinburgh, and to all my friends, from one end of Scotland to the other.

"Write to me, and send me what intelligence you can; and if anything is too bulky for the post, let me have it by the carrier. I do not like trusting winds and waves.—I am, dear Sir, your most, &c.

"SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 177.

TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"London, Feb. 7, 1774.

"DEAR SIR,—In a day or two after I had written the last discontented letter, I received my box, which was very welcome. But still I must entreat you

¹ The ancient burgh of Prestick, in Ayrshire.

to hasten Dr. Webster, and continue to pick up what you can that may be useful.

"Mr. Oglethorpe was with me this morning; you know his errand. He was not unwelcome.

"Tell Mrs. Boswell that my good intentions towards her still continue. I should be glad to do anything that would either benefit or please her.

"Chambers is not yet gone; but so hurried, or so negligent, or so proud, that I rarely see him. I have indeed, for some weeks past, been very ill of a cold and cough, and have been at Mrs. Thrale's, that I might be taken care of. I am much better: *novæ redeunt in prælia vires*; but I am yet tender, and easily disordered. How happy it was that neither of us were ill in the Hebrides.

"The question of literary property¹ is this day before the Lords. Murphy drew up the appellants' case, that is, the plea against the perpetual right. I have not seen it, nor heard the decision. I would not have the right perpetual.

"I will write to you as anything occurs, and do you send me something about my Scottish friends. I have very great kindness for them. Let me know likewise how fees come in, and when we are to see you.—I am, Sir, yours affectionately,
"SAM. JOHNSON."

He at this time wrote the following letters to Mr. Steevens, his able associate in editing Shakspeare:—

LETTER 178. TO GEORGE STEEVENS, ESQ.

Hampstead.

"Feb. 7, 1774.

"SIR,—If I am asked when I have seen Mr. Steevens, you know what answer I must give; if I am asked when I shall see him, I wish you would tell me what to say. If you have 'Lesley's History of Scotland,' or any other book about Scotland, except Boetius and Buchanan, it will be a kindness if you send them to, Sir, your humble servant,
SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 179. TO GEORGE STEEVENS, ESQ.

"Feb. 21, 1774.

"SIR,—We are thinking to augment our club, and I am desirous of nominating you, if you care to stand the ballot, and can attend on Friday nights at least twice in five weeks: less than this is too little, and rather more will be expected. Be pleased to let me know before Friday. I am, Sir, your most, &c.,
"SAM. JOHNSON."

¹ This question was not decided till Feb. 22.—"In consequence of this decision, the English booksellers have now no other security for any literary purchase they may make, but the statute of the 8th of Queen Anne, which secures to the author's assigns an exclusive property for fourteen years, to revert again to the author, and vest in him for fourteen years more."

20 Reg. 1774.—O.

LETTER 180.

TO GEORGE STEEVENS, ESQ.

" March 5, 1774.

"SIR,—Last night you became a member of the club; if you call on me on Friday, I will introduce you. A gentleman, proposed after you, was rejected. I thank you for Neander,¹ but wish he were not so fine. I will take care of him. I am, Sir, your humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 181.

TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

" March 5, 1774.

"DEAR SIR,—Dr. Webster's informations were much less exact, and much less determinate than I expected: they are, indeed, much less positive than, if he can trust his own book,² which he laid before me, he is able to give. But I believe it will always be found that he who calls much for information will advance his work but slowly.

"I am, however, obliged to you, dear Sir, for your endeavours to help me and hope, that between us, something will some time be done, if not on this on some occasion.

"Chambers is either married, or almost married, to Miss Wilton,³ a girl of sixteen, exquisitely beautiful, whom he has, with his lawyer's tongue, persuaded to take her chance with him in the East.

"We have added to the club, Charles Fox,⁴ Sir Charles Bunbury, Dr. Fordyce, and Mr. Steevens.⁵

"Return my thanks to Dr. Webster. Tell Dr. Robertson I have not much to reply to his censure of my negligence: and tell Dr. Blair, that since he has written hither⁶ what I said to him, we must now consider ourselves as even, forgive one another, and begin again. I care not how soon, for he is a very pleasing man. Pay my compliments to all my friends, and remind Lord Elibank of his promise to give me all his works.

"I hope Mrs. Boswell and little Miss are well. When shall I see them again? She is a sweet lady; only she was so glad to see me go, that I have almost a mind to come again, that she may again have the same pleasure.

¹ See the catalogue of Mr. Steevens's Library, No. 265:—"Neandri (Mich.) Opus aureum, Gr. et Lat. 2 tom. 4to. *cortio turcico, foliis deauratis*. Lipsiæ, 1577." This was doubtless the book lent by Steevens to Johnson.—MALONE.

² A manuscript drawn by Dr. Webster of all the parishes in Scotland, ascertaining their length, breadth, number of inhabitants, and distinguishing Protestants and Roman Catholics. This book had been transmitted to government, and Dr. Johnson saw a copy of it in Dr. Webster's possession.

³ Daughter of Joseph Wilton, R.A., the sculptor.—C.

⁴ Mr. Fox was brought in by Mr. Burke, and this meeting at the Club was the only link of acquaintance between Mr. Fox and Johnson.—MACKINTOSH.

⁵ It is odd that he does not mention Mr. Gibbon, whose admission seems, by Mr. Hatchett's list, to have been contemporary with Steevens's.—C.

⁶ This applies to one of Johnson's rude speeches, the mere repetition of which by Dr. Blair, Johnson, with more ingenuity than justice, chose to consider as equivalent to the original offence; but it turned out that Blair had *not* told the story.—C.

"Inquire if it be practicable to send a small present of a cask of porter to Dunvegan, Rasay, and Col. I would not wish to be thought forgetful of civilities. I am, Sir, your humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

On the 5th of March I wrote to him, requesting his counsel whether I should this spring come to London. I stated to him on the one hand some pecuniary embarrassments, which, together with my wife's situation at that time, made me hesitate; and on the other, the pleasure and improvement which my annual visit to the metropolis always afforded me; and particularly mentioned a peculiar satisfaction which I experienced in celebrating the festival of Easter in St. Paul's cathedral; that, to my fancy, it appeared like going up to Jerusalem at the feast of the Passover; and that the strong devotion which I felt on that occasion diffused its influence on my mind through the rest of the year.

LETTER 182.

TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

Not dated, but written about the 15th of March.

"DEAR SIR,—I am ashamed to think that since I received your letter I have passed so many days without answering it.

"I think there is no great difficulty in resolving your doubts. The reasons for which you are inclined to visit London are, I think, not of sufficient strength to answer the objections. That you should delight to come once a year to the fountain of intelligence and pleasure is very natural; but both information and pleasure must be regulated by propriety. Pleasure, which cannot be obtained but by unseasonable and unsuitable expense, must always end in pain; and pleasure, which must be enjoyed at the expense of another's pain, can never be such as a worthy mind can fully delight in.

"What improvement you might gain by coming to London, you may easily supply or easily compensate, by enjoining yourself some particular study at home, or opening some new avenue to information. Edinburgh is not yet exhausted; and I am sure you will find no pleasure here which can deserve either that you should anticipate any part of your future fortune, or that you should condemn yourself and your lady to penurious frugality for the rest of the year.

"I need not tell you what regard you owe to Mrs. Boswell's entreaties; or how much you ought to study the happiness of her who studies yours with so much diligence, and of whose kindness you enjoy such good effects. Life cannot subsist in society but by reciprocal concessions. She permitted you to ramble last year, you must permit her now to keep you at home.

"Your last reason is so serious that I am unwilling to oppose it. Yet you must remember, that your image of worshipping once a year in a certain place, in imitation of the Jews, is but a comparison; and *simile non est idem*; if the annual resort to Jerusalem was a duty to the Jews, it was a duty because it was commanded; and you have no such command, therefore no such duty. It may be dangerous to receive too readily, and indulge too fondly, opinions, from which, perhaps, no pious mind is wholly disengaged, of local sanctity and local devotion. You know what strange effects they have produced over a great part of the Christian world. I am now writing, and you, when you read this, are reading under the Eye of Omnipresence.

"To what degree fancy is to be admitted into religious offices, it would require much deliberation to determine. I am far from intending totally to exclude it. Fancy is a faculty bestowed by our Creator, and it is reasonable that all his gifts should be used to his glory, that all our faculties should co-operate in his worship; but they are to co-operate according to the will of him who gave them, according to the order which his wisdom has established. As ceremonies prudential or convenient are less obligatory than positive ordinances, as bodily worship is only the token to others or ourselves of mental adoration, so fancy is always to act in subordination to reason. We may take fancy for a companion, but must follow reason for our guide. We may allow fancy to suggest certain ideas in certain places; but reason must always be heard, when she tells us, that those ideas and those places have no natural or necessary relation. When we enter a church we habitually recall to mind the duty of adoration, but we must not omit adoration for want of a temple: because we know, and ought to remember, that the Universal Lord is everywhere present; and that, therefore, to come to Iona, or to Jerusalem, though it may be useful, cannot be necessary.

"Thus I have answered your letter, and have not answered it negligently. I love you too well to be careless when you are serious.

"I think I shall be very diligent next week about our travels, which I have too long neglected. I am, dear Sir, your most, &c.,

"SAM. JOHNSON.

"Compliments to madam and miss."

LETTER 183.

TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"May 10, 1774

"DEAR SIR,—The lady who delivers this has a lawsuit, in which she desires to make use of your skill and eloquence, and she seems to think that she shall have something more of both for a recommendation from me, which, though I know how little you want any external incitement to your duty, I could not refuse her because I know that at least it will not hurt her, to tell you that I wish her well.—I am, Sir, your most humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON "

LETTER 184.

FROM MR. BOSWELL.

"Edinburgh, May 12, 1774.

"Lord Hailes has begged of me to offer you his best respects, and to transmit to you specimens of 'Annals of Scotland, from the Accession of Malcolm Kenmore to the death of James V.,' in drawing up which his lordship has been engaged for some time. His lordship writes to me thus:—'If I could procure Dr. Johnson's criticisms, they would be of great use to me in the prosecution of my work, as they would be judicious and true. I have no right to ask that favour of him. If you could, it would highly oblige me.'

"Dr. Blair requests you may be assured that he did not write to London what you said to him, and that neither by word nor letter has he made the least complaint of you; but on the contrary has a high respect for you, and loves you much more since he saw you in Scotland. It would both divert and please you to see his eagerness about this matter."

LETTER 185.

TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"Streatham, June 12, 1774.

"DEAR SIR,—Yesterday I put the first sheets of the 'Journey to the Hebrides' to the press. I have endeavoured to do you some justice in the first paragraph. It will be one volume in octavo, not thick.

"It will be proper to make some presents in Scotland. You shall tell me to whom I shall give; and I have stipulated twenty-five for you to give in your own name. Some will take the present better from me, others better from you. In this, you who are to live in the place ought to direct. Consider it. Whatever you can get for my purpose send me; and make my compliments to your lady and both the young ones.—I am, Sir, your, &c.

"SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 186.

FROM MR. BOSWELL.

"Edinburgh, June 24, 1777.

"You do not acknowledge the receipt of the various packets which I have sent to you. Neither can I prevail with you to *answer* my letters, though you honour me with *returns*. You have said nothing to me about poor Goldsmith,¹ nothing about Langton.

"I have received for you, from the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge in Scotland, the following Erse books:—'The New Testament,' 'Baxter's Call,' 'The Confession of Faith of the Assembly of Divines at Westminster,' 'The Mother's Catechism,' 'A Gaelic and English Vocabulary.'"²

¹ Dr. Goldsmith died April 4, this year.² These books Dr Johnson presented to the Bodleian Library.

LETTER 187.

TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"July 4, 1774.

"DEAR SIR,—I wish you could have looked over my book before the printer, but it could not easily be. I suspect some mistakes; but as I deal, perhaps, more in notions than in facts, the matter is not great; and the second edition will be mended, if any such there be. The press will go on slowly for a time, because I am going into Wales to-morrow.

"I should be very sorry if I appeared to treat such a character as Lord Hailes otherwise than with high respect. I return the sheets,¹ to which I have done what mischief I could; and finding it so little, thought not much of sending them. The narrative is clear, lively, and short.

"I have done worse to Lord Hailes than by neglecting his sheets: I have run him in debt. Dr. Horne, the president of Magdalen College in Oxford, wrote to me about three months ago, that he purposed to reprint Walton's Lives, and desired me to contribute to the work: my answer was, that Lord Hailes intended the same publication; and Dr. Horne has resigned it to him. His lordship must now think seriously about it.

"Of poor dear Dr. Goldsmith there is little to be told, more than the papers have made public. He died of a fever, I am afraid, more violent by uneasiness of mind. His debts began to be heavy, and all his resources were exhausted. Sir Joshua is of opinion that he owed not less than two thousand pounds. Was ever poet so trusted before?

"You may, if you please, put the inscription thus:—

"*“ Maria Scotorum Regina nata 15—, a suis in exilium acta 15—, ab hos-
piti neci data 15—,”* You must find the years.

"Of your second daughter you certainly gave the account yourself, though you have forgotten it. While Mrs. Boswell is well, never doubt of a boy. Mrs. Thrale brought, I think, five girls running, but while I was with you she had a boy.

"I am obliged to you for all your pamphlets, and of the last I hope to make some use. I made some of the former.—I am, dear Sir, your most affectionate servant,

"SAM JOHNSON.

"My compliments to all the three ladies."

LETTER 188.

TO BENNET LANGTON, ESQ.

At Langton.

"July 5, 1774.

"DEAR SIR,—You have reason to reproach me that I have left your last letter so long unanswered, but I had nothing particular to say. Chambers

¹ On the cover enclosing them Dr. Johnson wrote, "If my delay has given any reason for supposing that I have not a very deep sense of the honour done me by asking my judgment, I am very sorry."

you find, is gone far, and poor Goldsmith is gone much further. He died of a fever, exasperated, as I believe, by the fear of distress. He had raised money and squandered it, by every artifice of acquisition and folly of expense. But let not his frailties be remembered; he was a very great man.

"I have just begun to print my Journey to the Hebrides, and am leaving the press to take another journey into Wales, whither Mr. Thrale is going, to take possession of, at least, five hundred a year, fallen to his lady. All at Streatham, that are alive, are well.

"I have never recovered from the last dreadful illness,¹ but flatter myself that I grow gradually better; much, however, yet remains to mend. *Κύριε ἐλέησον.*²

"If you have the Latin version of 'Busy, curious, thirsty fly,' be so kind as to transcribe and send it; but you need not be in haste, for I shall be I know not where, for at least five weeks. I wrote the following tetrastick on poor Goldsmith:

"Τὸν τάφον εἰσοράας τὸν Ὀλιβαροῖο κοῖτην
 Ἄφροσι μὴ σεμνὴν, Ξεῖνε, πόδεσσι πάτει
 Ὅισι μέμλε φύσις, μέτρων χάρις, ἔργα παλαιῶν,
 Κλαίετε ποιητὴν, ἱστορικόν, φύσικόν.

"Please to make my most respectful compliments to all the ladies, and remember me to young George and his sisters. I reckon George begins to show a pair of heels. Do not be sullen now, but let me find a letter when I come back.—I am, dear Sir, your affectionate, humble servant, SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 189.

TO MR. ROBERT LEVETT.

"Llewenny, in Denbighshire, Aug. 16, 1774.

"DEAR SIR,—Mr. Thrale's affairs have kept him here a great while, nor do I know exactly when we shall come hence. I have sent you a bill upon Mr. Strahan.—I have made nothing of the ipecacuanha, but have taken abundance of pills, and hope that they have done me good.

"Wales, so far as I have yet seen of it, is a very beautiful and rich country, all enclosed and planted. Denbigh is not a mean town. Make my compliments to all my friends, and tell Frank I hope he remembers my advice. When his money is out let him have more. I am, Sir, your humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON.

LETTER 190.

FROM MR. BOSWELL.

"Edinburgh, Aug. 30, 1774.

"You have given me an inscription for a portrait of Mary Queen of Scots in which you, in a short and striking manner, point out her hard fate. But

¹ Although his Letters and his Prayers and Meditations speak of his late illness as merely "a cold and cough," it would seem by this use of the word "*dreadful*," that it had, at some time, taken a more serious character. We have no trace of any illness since that of 1766, which could be called *dreadful*."—C.

² *Lord have mercy upon us.* Litany.—C

you will be pleased to keep in mind, that my picture is a representation of a particular scene in her history; her being forced to resign her crown, while she was imprisoned in the castle of Lochleven. I must, therefore, beg that you will be kind enough to give me an inscription suited to that particular scene; or determine which of the two formerly transmitted to you is the best; and at any rate, favour me with an English translation. It will be doubly kind if you comply with my request speedily.

"Your critical notes on the specimen of Lord Hailes's '*Annals of Scotland*' are excellent. I agree with you on every one of them. He himself objected only to the alteration of *free* to *brave*, in the passage where he says that Edward 'departed with the glory due to the conqueror of a free people.' He says, to call the Scots brave would only add to the glory of their conqueror. You will make allowance for the national zeal of our annalist. I now send a few more leaves of the *Annals*, which I hope you will peruse, and return with observations, as you did upon the former occasion. Lord Hailes writes to me thus: 'Mr. Boswell will be pleased to express the grateful sense which Sir David Dalrymple has of Dr. Johnson's attention to his little specimen. The further specimen will show that

'Even in an *Edward* he can see desert.'

"It gives me much pleasure to hear that a republication of Isaac Walton's *Lives* is intended. You have been in a mistake in thinking that Lord Hailes had it in view. I remember one morning, while he sat with you in my house, he said, that there should be a new edition of Walton's *Lives*; and you said that 'they should be noted a little.' This was all that passed on that subject. You must, therefore, inform Dr. Horne, that he may resume his plan. I enclose a note concerning it; and if Dr. Horne will write to me, all the attention that I can give shall be cheerfully bestowed upon what I think a pious work, the preservation and elucidation of Walton, by whose writings I have been most pleasingly edified."

LETTER 191.

FROM MR. BOSWELL.

"Edinburgh, Sept. 16, 1774.

"Wales has probably detained you longer than I supposed. You will have become quite a mountaineer, by visiting Scotland one year and Wales another. You must next go to Switzerland. Cambria will complain, if you do not honour her also with some remarks. And I find *concessere columnas*, the booksellers expect another book. I am impatient to see your '*Tour to Scotland and the Hebrides*.' Might you not send me a copy by the post as soon as it is printed off?"

LETTER 192.

TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"London, Oct. 1, 1774.

"DEAR SIR — Yesterday I returned from my Welsh journey. I was sorry to leave my book suspended so long; but having an opportunity of seeing, with

so much convenience, a new part of the island, I could not reject it. I have been in five of the six counties of North Wales; and have seen St. Asaph and Bangor, the two seats of their bishops; have been upon Penmanmaur and Snowdon, and passed over into Anglesea. But Wales is so little different from England, that it offers nothing to the speculation of the traveller.

"When I came home, I found several of your papers, with some pages of Lord Hailes's Annals, which I will consider. I am in haste to give you some account of myself, lest you should suspect me of negligence in the pressing business which I find recommended to my care, and which I knew nothing of till now, when all care is vain.¹

"In the distribution of my books I purpose to follow your advice, adding such as shall occur to me. I am not pleased with your notes of remembrance added to your names, for I hope I shall not easily forget them.

"I have received four Erse books, without any direction, and suspect that they are intended for the Oxford library. If that is the intention I think it will be proper to add the metrical psalms, and whatever else is printed in Erse, that the present may be complete. The donor's name should be told.

"I wish you could have read the book before it was printed, but our distance does not easily permit it. I am sorry Lord Hailes does not intend to publish Walton; I am afraid it will not be done so well, if it be done at all. I purpose now to drive the book forward. Make my compliments to Mrs. Boswell, and let me hear often from you. I am, &c.

"SAM. JOHNSON."

This tour to Wales, which was made in company with Mr., Mrs. [and Miss] Thrale, though it no doubt contributed to his health and amusement, did not give an occasion to such a discursive exercise of his mind as our tour to the Hebrides. I do not find that he kept any journal or notes of what he saw there. All that I heard him say of it was, that "instead of bleak and barren mountains, there were green and fertile ones; and that one of the castles in Wales would contain all the castles that he had seen in Scotland."

¹ I had written to him, to request his interposition in behalf of a convict, who I thought was very unjustly condemned.

DIARY—1774.

[Dr. Johnson's Diary of his Welsh Tour was preserved by Barber, and was first published by Mr. Duppa in 1816. It is now reprinted, with some of the notes of Mr. Duppa—Mrs. Piozzi, and Mr. Croker; but a collation of the original MS., kindly entrusted to Mr. Murray by its present proprietor, the Rev. Archdeacon Butler, of Shrewsbury, has supplied many corrections, and some omissions, in the text. 1885.]

Tuesday, July 5.—We left Streatham 11 A.M.—Price of four horses two shillings a mile.—Barnet 1.40 P.M.—On the road I read Tully's Epistles.—At night at Dunstable.

Wednesday, July 6.—To Lichfield, eighty-three miles. To the Swan.

Thursday, July 7.—To Mrs. Porter's—To the cathedral. To Mrs. Aston's. To Mr. Green's.¹ Mr. Green's museum was much admired, and Mr. Newton's china.

Friday, July 8.—To Mr. Newton's—To Mrs. Cobb's—Dr. Darwin's²—I went again to Mrs. Aston's. She was sorry to part.

Saturday, July 9.—Breakfasted at Mr. Garrick's³—visited Miss Vyse—Miss Seward⁴—Went to Dr. Taylor's [at Ashbourn]—I read a little on the road in Tully's Epistles and Martial—Mart. 8th, 44, *lino pro limo*.⁵

Sunday, July 10.—Morning at church. Company at dinner.

Monday, July 11.—At Ilam—At Oakover—I was less pleased with Ilam than when I saw it first; but my friends were much delighted.

Tuesday, July 12.—At Chatsworth—The water willow⁶ The cascade, shot out from many spouts—The fountains—The water tree—The smooth floors in

¹ Mr. Richard Green was an apothecary, and related to Dr. Johnson. He had a considerable collection of antiquities, natural curiosities, and ingenious works of art.—DUPPA.

² Dr. Erasmus Darwin: at this time he lived at Lichfield, where he had practised as a physician from the year 1756. Miss Seward says, that Johnson and Darwin had only one or two interviews. Mutual and strong dislike subsisted between them. Dr. Darwin died April 18 1802, in his sixty-ninth year.—D.

³ Peter Garrick, the elder brother of David. I think he was an attorney, but he seemed to lead an independent life, and talked all about fishing.—PIOZZI.

⁴ Dr. Johnson would not suffer me to speak to Miss Seward.—P. So early was the coolness between them.—CROKER.

⁵ In the edition of Martial, which he was reading, the last word of the line

"Defuat, et lento splendescat turbida *lino*,"

was, no doubt, misprinted *lino*.—C.

⁶ There was a water-work at Chatworth with a concealed spring, which, upon touching, spouted out streams from every bough of a willow tree.—P

the highest rooms¹—Atlas fifteen hands inch and half²—River running through the park—The porticoes on the sides support two galleries for the first floor—My friends were not struck with the house—It fell below my ideas of the furniture—The staircase is in a corner of the house—The hall in the corner the grandest room, though only a room of passage—On the ground floor, only the chapel and breakfast-room, and a small library; the rest, servants' rooms and offices—A bad inn.

Wednesday, July 13.—At Matlock.

Thursday, July 14.—At dinner at Oakover; too deaf to hear, or much converse—Mrs. Gell—The chapel at Oakover—The wood of the pews grossly painted—I could not read the epitaph—Would learn the old hands.

Friday, July 15.—At Ashbourn—Mrs. Dyott and her daughters came in the morning—Mr. Dyott dined with us—We visited Mr. Flint.

“Τὸ πρῶτον Μῶρος, τὸ δὲ δεύτερον εἶπεν Ἑρασμὸς,
Τὸ τρίτον ἐκ Μουσῶν στέμμα Μικυλλὸς ἔχει.”³

Saturday, July 16.—At Dovedale, with Mr. Langley⁴ and Mr. Flint. It is a place that deserves a visit; but did not answer my expectation. The river is small, the rocks are grand. Reynard's Hall is a cave very high in the rock; it goes backward several yards, perhaps eight. To the left is a small opening, through which I crept, and found another cavern, perhaps four yards square; at the back was a breach yet smaller, which I could not easily have entered, and, wanting light, did not inspect. I was in a cave yet higher, called Reynard's Kitchen. There is a rock called the Church, in which I saw no resemblance that could justify the name. Dovedale is about two miles long. We walked towards the head of the Dove, which is said to rise about five miles above two caves called the Dogholes, at the foot of Dovedale. In one place, where the rocks approached, I propose to build an arch from rock to rock over the stream, with a summer-house upon it. The water murmured pleasantly among the stones. I thought that the heat and exercise mended my hearing. I bore the fatigue of the walk, which was very laborious, without inconvenience. There were with us Gilpin⁵ and Parker.⁶ Having heard of this

¹ Old oak floors polished by rubbing. Johnson, I suppose, wondered that they should take such pains with the garrets.—P.

² This was a race-horse, which was very handsome and very gentle, and attracted so much of Dr Johnson's attention, that he said, “Of all the Duke's possessions, I like Atlas best.”—D.

³ “More bore away the first crown of the Muses, Erasmus the second, and Micyllus has the third.” Micyllus's real name was *Molter*; see his articles in *Bayle*. His best work was “*De re Metrica*.”—C.

⁴ The Rev. Mr. Langley was master of the grammar-school at Ashbourn.—C.

⁵ Mr. Gilpin was an accomplished youth, at this time an under-graduate at Oxford. His father was an old silversmith near Lincoln's Inn Fields.—P.

⁶ John Parker, of Brownsholme, in Lancashire, Esq.—D.

place before, I had formed some imperfect idea, to which it did not answer Brown¹ says he was disappointed. I certainly expected a larger river where I found only a clear quick brook. I believe I had imagined a valley enclosed by rocks, and terminated by a broad expanse of water. He that has seen Dove-dale has no need to visit the Highlands. In the afternoon we visited old Mrs. Dale.

July, 17.—Sunday morning, at church—*Kaθ'*[*apous*] Afternoon at Mr. Dyott's.

Monday, July 18.—Dined at Mr. Gell's.²

Tuesday, July 19.—We went to Kedleston to see Lord Scardale's new house, which is very costly, but ill contrived—The hall is very stately, lighted by three skylights; it has two rows of marble pillars, dug, as I hear, from Langley, in a quarry of Northamptonshire; the pillars are very large and massy, and take up too much room: they were better away. Behind the hall is a circular saloon, useless, and therefore ill contrived—The corridors that join the wings to the body are mere passages through segments of circles—The state bedchamber was very richly furnished—The dining parlour was more splendid with gilt plate than any that I have seen—There were many pictures—The grandeur was all below—The bedchambers were small, low, dark, and fitter for a prison than a house of splendour—The kitchen has an opening into the gallery, by which its heat and its fumes are dispersed over the house—There seemed in the whole more cost than judgment—We went then to the silk mill at Derby, where I remarked a particular manner of propagating motion from a horizontal to a vertical wheel—We were desired to leave the men only two shillings.—Mr. Thrale's bill at the inn for dinner was eighteen shillings and tenpence—At night I went to Mr. Langley's, Mrs. Wood's, Captain Astle, &c.

Wednesday, July 20.—We left Ashbourn³ and went to Buxton—Thence to Pool's Hole, which is narrow at first, but then rises into a high arch; but is so obstructed with crags, that it is difficult to walk in it—There are two ways to the end, which is, they say, six hundred and fifty yards from the mouth—They take passengers up the higher way, and bring them back the lower—The higher way was so difficult and dangerous, that, having tried it, I desisted—I found no level part—At night we came to Macclesfield, a very large town in Cheshire, little known—It has a silk mill: it has a handsome church, which, however, is but a chapel, for the town belongs to some parish of another name [Prestbury], as Stourbridge lately did to Old Swinford—Macclesfield has a town-hall, and is, I suppose, a corporate town.

¹ Mrs. Piozzi "rather thought" that this was *Capability Brown*, whose opinion on a point of landscape, probably gathered from Gilpin or Parker, Johnson thought worth recording.—C.

² Mr. Gell, of Hopton Hall, the father of Sir William Gell, well known for his *Topography of Troy*.—D.

³ It would seem, that from the 9th to the 20th, the head-quarters of the party were at Ashbourn, whence they had made the several excursions noted.—C.

Thursday, July 21.—We came to Congleton, where there is likewise a silk mill—Then to Middlewich, a mean old town, without any manufacture, but, I think, a corporation—Thence we proceeded to Namptwich, an old town: from the inn, I saw scarcely any but black timber houses—I tasted the brine water, which contains much more salt than the sea water—By slow evaporation, they make large crystals of salt; by quick boiling, small granulations—It seemed to have no other preparation. At evening we came to Combermere,¹ so called from a wide lake.

Friday, July 22.—We went upon the mere—I pulled a bulrush of about ten feet—I saw no convenient boats upon the mere.

Saturday, July 23.—We visited Lord Kilmorey's house²—It is large and convenient, with many rooms, none of which are magnificently spacious—The furniture was not splendid—The bed-curtains were guarded³—Lord Kilmorey⁴ showed the place with too much exultation—He has no park and little water.

Sunday, July 24.—We went to a chapel, built by Sir Lynch Cotton for his tenants—It is consecrated, and therefore, I suppose, endowed—It is neat and plain—The communion plate is handsome—It has iron pales and gates of great elegance, brought from Llewenny, "for Robert has laid all open."⁵

Monday, July 25.—We saw Hawkestone, the seat of Sir Rowland Hill, and were conducted by Miss Hill over a large tract of rocks and woods; a region abounding with striking scenes and terrific grandeur. We were always on the brink of a precipice, or at the foot of a lofty rock; but the steeps were seldom naked: in many places, oaks of uncommon magnitude shot up from the crannies of stone; and where there were not tall trees, there were underwoods and bushes. Round the rocks is a narrow patch cut upon the stone, which is very frequently hewn into steps; but art has proceeded no further than to make the succession of wonders safely accessible. The whole circuit is somewhat laborious; it is terminated by a grotto cut in a rock to a great extent, with many windings, and supported by pillars, not hewn into regularity, but such as imitate the sports of nature, by asperities and protuberances. The place is without any dampness, and would afford an habitation not uncomfortable. There were from space to space seats in the rock. Though it wants water, it excels Dovedale by the extent of its prospects, the awfulness of its shades, the

¹ At this time the seat of Sir Lynch Salusbury Cotton, now of Lord Combermere, his grandson, from which place he takes his title. It stands on the site of an old abbey of Benedictine monks. The lake, or mere, is about three quarters of a mile long, but of no great width.—D.

² Shavington Hall, in Shropshire.—D.

³ Probably guarded from wear or accident by being covered with some inferior material.—C.

⁴ Thomas Needham, eighth Viscount Kilmorey.—G.

⁵ Robert was the eldest son of Sir Lynch Salusbury Cotton, and lived at Llewenny at this time.—D. All the seats in England were, a hundred years ago, enclosed with walls, through which there were generally "iron pales and gates." Mr. Cotton had, no doubt, "laid all open" by prostrating the walls; and the pales and gates had thus become useless.—C.

horrors of its precipices, the verdure of its hollows, and the loftiness of its rocks: the ideas which it forces upon the mind are the sublime, the dreadful, and the vast. Above is inaccessible altitude, below is horrible profundity; but it excels the garden of Ilam only in extent. Ilam has grandeur, tempered with softness; the walker congratulates his own arrival at the place, and is grieved to think that he must ever leave it. As he looks up to the rocks, his thoughts are elevated; as he turns his eyes on the valleys he is composed and soothed. He that mounts the precipices at Hawkestone wonders how he came thither, and doubts how he shall return. His walk is an adventure, and his departure an escape. He has not the tranquillity, but the horror, of solitude; a kind of turbulent pleasure, between fright and admiration. Ilam is the fit abode of pastoral virtue, and might properly diffuse its shades over nymphs and swains. Hawkestone can have no fitter inhabitants than giants of mighty bone and bold enterprise;¹ men of lawless courage and heroic violence. Hawkestone should be described by Milton, and Ilam by Parnel—Miss Hill showed the whole succession of wonders with great civility. The house was magnificent, compared with the rank of the owner.

Tuesday, July 26.—We left Combermere, where we have been treated with great civility—Sir L. is gross, the lady weak and ignorant—The house is spacious, but not magnificent; built at different times with different materials; part is of timber, part of stone or brick, plastered and painted to look like timber—It is the best house that ever I saw of that kind—The mere, or lake, is large, with a small island, on which there is a summer-house, shaded with great trees; some were hollow, and have seats in their trunks—In the afternoon we came to West-Chester; (my father went to the fair when I had the small-pox.) We walked round the walls, which are complete, and contain one mile three-quarters, and one hundred and one yards; within them are many gardens: they are very high, and two may walk very commodiously side by side—On the inside is a rail—There are towers from space to space, not very frequent, and I think not all complete.

Wednesday, July 27.—We staid at Chester and saw the cathedral, which is not of the first rank—The castle. In one of the rooms the assizes are held, and the refectory of the old abbey, of which part is a grammar-school—The master seemed glad to see me—The cloister is very solemn; over it are chambers, in which the singing men live—In one part of the street was a subterranean arch, very strongly built; in another, what they called, I believe rightly, a Roman hypocaust²—Chester has many curiosities.

¹ *Paradise Lost*, book xl. v. 642.—D.

² The hypocaust is of a triangular figure, supported by thirty-two pillars. Here is also an antechamber, exactly of the same extent with the hypocaust, with an opening in the middle into it. This is sunk nearly two feet below the level of the former, and is of the same rectangular figure; so that both together are an exact square. This was the room allotted for the slaves who attended to heat the place; the other was the receptacle of the fuel designed to heat the room above, the *concamerata sudatio*, or sweating chamber; where people

Thursday, July 28.—We entered Wales, dined at Mould, and came to Llewenny.

Friday, July 29.—We were at Llewenny—In the lawn at Llewenny is a spring of fine water, which rises above the surface into a stone basin, from which it runs to waste, in a continual stream, through a pipe—There are very large trees—The hall at Llewenny is forty feet long, and twenty-eight broad—The dining-parlours thirty-six feet long, and twenty-six broad—It is partly sashed, and partly has casements.

Saturday, July 30.—We went to Bâch y Graig,¹ where we found an old house, built 1567, in an uncommon and incommodious form—My mistress chattered about tiring, but I prevailed on her to go to the top—The floors have been stolen: the windows are stopped—The house was less than I seemed to expect—The river Clwyd is a brook with a bridge of one arch, about one-third of a mile²—The woods have many trees, generally young; but some which seem to decay—They have been lopped—The house never had a garden—The addition of another story would make an useful house, but it cannot be great—Some buildings which Clough, the founder, intended for warehouses, would make store-chambers and servants' rooms—The ground seems to be good—I wish it well.

Sunday, July 31.—We went to church at St. Asaph—The cathedral, though not large, has something of dignity and grandeur—The cross aisle is very short—It has scarcely any monuments—The quire has, I think, thirty-two stalls of antique workmanship—On the backs were Canonics, Prebend, Cancellarius, Thesaurarius, Præcentor—The constitution I do not know, but it has all the usual titles and dignities—The service was sung only in the Psalms and Hymns—The bishop [Dr. Shipley] was very civil—We went to his palace, which is but mean—They have a library, and design a room—There lived Lloyd and Dodwell.³

Monday, August 1.—We visited Denbigh, and the remains of its castle—The town consists of one main street, and some that cross it, which I have not seen—The chief street ascends with a quick rise for a great length; the houses are built some with rough stone, some with brick, and a few are of timber—The castle, with its whole enclosure, has been a prodigious pile; it is now so ruined that the form of the inhabited part cannot easily be traced—There are, as in all old buildings, said to be extensive vaults, which the ruins of the upper

were seated, either in niches, or on benches, placed one above the other, during the time of the operation.—D.

¹ This was the mansion-house of the estate which had fallen to Mrs. Thrale, and was the cause of this visit to Wales. Incredible as it may appear, it is certain that this lady imported from Italy a nephew of Piozzi's, and, making him assume her maiden name of *Salisbury*, bequeathed to this foreigner (if she did not give it in her life-time) this ancient patrimonial estate, to the exclusion of her own children.—C.

² That is, one third of a mile from the house.—C.

³ Lloyd was raised to the see of St. Asaph in 1690. He was one of the seven bishops. He died Bishop of Worcester, Aug. 30, 1717. Dodwell was a man of extensive learning, and an intimate friend of Lloyd.—D.

works cover and conceal, but into which boys sometimes find a way—To clear all passages, and trace the whole of what remains, would require much labour and expense—We saw a church, which was once the chapel of the castle, but is used by the town: it is dedicated to St. Hilary, and has an income of about ———. At a small distance is the ruin of a church said to have been begun by the great Earl of Leicester, and left unfinished at his death—One side, and I think the east end, are yet standing—There was a stone in the wall over the doorway, which, it was said, would fall and crush the best scholar in the diocese—One Price would not pass under it. They have taken it down—We then saw the chapel of Llewenev, founded by one of the Salusburys: it is very complete: the monumental stones lie in the ground—A chimney has been added to it, but it is otherwise not much injured, and might be easily repaired—We went to the parish church of Denbigh, which, being near a mile from the town, is only used when the parish officers are chosen—In the chapel, on Sundays, the service is read thrice, the second time only in English, the first and third in Welsh—The bishop came to survey the castle, and visited likewise St. Hilary's chapel, which is that which the town uses—The hay-barn, built with brick pillars from space to space, and covered with a roof—A more elegant and lofty hovel—The rivers here are mere torrents, which are suddenly swelled by the rain to great breadth and great violence, but have very little constant stream; such are the Clwyd and Elwy—There are yet no mountains—The ground is beautifully embellished with woods, and diversified by inequalities—In the parish church of Denbigh is a bas-relief of Lloyd the antiquary, who was before Camden—He is kneeling at his prayers.¹

Tuesday, Aug. 2.—We rode to a summer-house of Mr. Cotton, which has a very extensive prospect; it is meanly built and unskilfully disposed—We went to Dymerchion church, where the old clerk acknowledged his mistress—It is the parish church of Bâch y Graig; a mean fabric; Mr. Salusbury was buried in it: Bâch y Graig has fourteen seats in it. As we rode by, I looked at the house again—We saw Llannerch, a house not mean, with a small park very well watered—There was an avenue of oaks, which, in a foolish compliance with the present mode, has been cut down—A few are yet standing; the owner's name is Davies—The way lay through pleasant lanes, and overlooked a region beautifully diversified with trees and grass. At Dymerchion church there is English service only once a month—this is about twenty miles from the English border—The old clerk had great appearance of joy at the sight of his mistress, and foolishly said, that he was now willing to die—He had only a crown given him by my mistress—At Dymerchion church the texts on the walls are in Welsh.

Wednesday, Aug. 3.—We went in the coach to Holywell—Talk with mistress about flattery²—Holywell is a market town, neither very small nor mean—The

¹ Humphry Llwyd was a native of Denbigh, practised there as a physician, and also represented the town in parliament. He died 1668.—D.

² He said that I flattered the people to whose houses we went: I was sauncy, and said I was

spring called Winifred's Well is very clear, and so copious, that it yields one hundred tuns of water in a minute—It is all at once a very great stream, which, within perhaps thirty yards of its irruption, turns a mill, and in a course of two miles, eighteen mills more—In descent, it is very quick—It then falls in o the sea—The well is covered by a lofty circular arch, supported by pillars; and over this arch is an old chapel, now a school—The chancel is separated by a wall—The bath is completely and indecently open—A woman bathed while we all looked on—In the church, which makes a good appearance, and is surrounded by galleries to receive a numerous congregation, we were present while a child was christened in Welsh—We went down by the stream to see a prospect in which I had no part—We then saw a brass work, where the lapis calaminaris is gathered, broken, washed from the earth and the lead, though how the lead was separated I did not see; then calcined, afterwards ground fine, and then mixed by fire with copper—We saw several strong fires with melting pots, but the construction of the fireplaces I did not learn—At a copper-work, which receives its pigs of copper, I think, from Warrington, we saw a plate of copper put hot between steel rollers, and spread thin: I know not whether the upper roller was set to a certain distance, as I suppose, or acted only by its weight—At an iron work, I saw round bars formed by a notched hammer and anvil—There I saw a bar of about half an inch or more square, cut with shears worked by water, and then beaten hot into a thinner bar—The hammers all worked, as they were, by water, acting upon small bodies, moved very quick, as quick as by the hand—I then saw wire drawn, and gave a shilling—I have enlarged my notions, though not being able to see the movements, and having not time to peep closely, I know less than I might—I was less weary, and had better breath, as I walked farther.

Thursday, Aug. 4.—Rhudlan Castle is still a very noble ruin; all the walls still remain, so that a complete platform and elevations, not very imperfect, may be taken—It encloses a square of about thirty yards—The middle space was always open—The wall is, I believe, about thirty feet high, very thick, flanked with six round towers, each about eighteen feet, or less in diameter—Only one tower had a chimney, so that there was commodity of living—It was only a place of strength—The garrison had, perhaps, tents in the area.—Stapylton's house is pretty; ¹ there are pleasing shades about it, with a constant spring that supplies a cold bath—We then went to see a cascade—I trudged unwillingly, and was not sorry to find it dry—The water was, however, turned on, and produced a very striking cataract—They are paid a hundred pounds a year for permission to divert the stream to the mines—The river, for such it

obliged to be civil for *two*—meaning himself and me. He replied, nobody would thank me for compliments they did not understand. At Gwaynynog (Mr. Myddleton's), however, *he* was flattered, and was happy of course.—P.

¹ Bodryddan (pronounced, writes Mrs. Piozzi, *Potrothan*), formerly the residence of the Stapyltons, the parents of five co-heiresses, of whom Mrs. Cotton, afterwards Lady Salusbury Letton, was one.—D.

may be termed, rises from a single spring, which, like that of Winifred's, is covered with a building.—We called then at another house belonging to Mr. Lloyd, which made a handsome appearance—This country seems full of very splendid houses—Mrs. Thrale lost her purse—She expressed so much uneasiness, that I concluded the sum to be very great; but when I heard of only seven guineas, I was glad to find that she had so much sensibility of money.—I could not drink this day either coffee or tea after dinner—I know not when I missed before.

Friday, Aug. 5.—Last night my sleep was remarkably quiet—I knew not whether by fatigue in walking, or by forbearance of tea. I gave [up] the ipecacuanha—*Vin. emet.* had failed; so had *tartar emet.* I dined at Mr. Myddleton's, of Gwynnynog—The house was a gentleman's house, below the second rate, perhaps below the third, built of stone roughly cut—The rooms were low, and the passage above stairs gloomy, but the furniture was good—The table was well supplied, except that the fruit was bad—It was truly the dinner of a country gentleman¹—Two tables were filled with company, not inelegant—After dinner, the talk was of preserving the Welsh language—I offered them a scheme—Poor Evan Evans was mentioned as incorrigibly addicted to strong drink—Worthington was commended—Myddleton is the only man who, in Wales, has talked to me of literature—I wish he were truly zealous—I recommended the republication of David ap Rhee's Welsh Grammar—Two sheets of Hebrides came to me for correction to-day, F G.²

Saturday, Aug. 6.—Καθ [απισ] ὁρ [αστικη].—I corrected the two sheets—My sleep last night was disturbed—Washing at Chester and here, 5s. 1d.—I did not read—I saw to-day more of the outhouses at Llewenny—It is, in the whole, a very spacious house.

Sunday, Aug. 7.—I was at church at Bodfari. There was a service used for a sick woman, not canonically, but such as I have heard, I think, formerly at Lichfield, taken out of the visitation.—Καθ. μετρωσ.—The church is mean, but has a square tower for the bells, rather too stately for the church.

Observation.—*Dixit injustus*, Ps. 36., has no relation to the English³ *Pre-*

¹ Mrs. Piozzi, in one of her letters to Mr. Duppa on this passage, says, "Dr. Johnson loved a *fine* dinner, but would eat perhaps more heartily of a *coarse* one—boiled beef or veal pie; fish he seldom passed over, though he said that he only valued the sauce, and that *every* body eat the first as a vehicle for the second. When he poured *oyster sauce* over *plum pudding*, and the *melted butter* flowing from the toast into his *chocolate*, one might surely say that he was nothing less than delicate."—C.

² F. G. are the printer's signatures, by which it appears that at this time five sheets had already been printed.—D.

³ Dr. Johnson meant, that the words of the *Latin* version, "*diuiti injustus*," prefixed to the 86th Psalm (one of those appointed for the day), had no relation to the English version in the *Liturgy*: "My heart sheweth me the wickedness of the ungodly." The *biblical* version, however, has some accordance with the Latin, "The transgression of the *wicked saith* within my heart;" and Bishop Lowth renders it "The *wicked man*, according to the wickedness of his heart, *saith*." The *biblical* version of the psalms was made by the translators of the whole

serve us Lord, has the name of Robert Wisedome, 1618. *Barker's Bible—Battologiam ab iteratione*, recte distinguit Erasmus. *Mo. Orandi Deum*, p. 56. 144.²—Southwell's Thoughts of his own death³—Baudius on Erasmus.⁴

Monday, Aug. 8.—The Bishop and much company dined at Llewenev⁵—Talk of Greek and of the army—The Duke of Marlborough's officers useless⁶—Read *Iliad*,⁷ distinguished the paragraphs—I looked in Leland: an unpleasant book of mere hints⁸—Lichfield school ten pounds, and five pounds from the hospital.

Wednesday, Aug. 10.—At Lloyd's, of Maesmynnau: a good house, and a very large walled garden—I read Windus's Account of his Journey to Mequinez, and of Stewart's Embassy⁹—I had read in the morning Wasse's Greek

Bible, under James I., from the original *Hebrew*, and is closer than the version used in the Liturgy, which was made in the reign of Henry VIII. from the *Greek*.—C.

¹ This alludes to "a Prayer by R. W." (evidently Robert Wisedome) which Sir Henry Ellis, of the British Museum, has found among the Hymns which follow the old version of the singing Psalms, at the end of Barker's Bible of 1639. It begins,

" Preserve us, Lord, by thy dear word,
From Turk and Pope, defend us, Lord!
Which both would thrust out of his throne
Our Lord Jesus Christ, thy deare son."—C.

² In allusion to our Saviour's censure of vain repetition in prayer (*battalogia*—Matt. vi. 7). Erasmus, in the passage cited, defends the words "*My God! my God!*" as an expression of justifiable earnestness.—C.

³ This alludes to Southwell's stanzas "Upon the Image of Death," in his *Mœonia*, a collection of spiritual poems:—

" Before my face the picture hangs
That daily should put me in mind
Of those cold names and bitter pangs
That shortly I am like to find;
But, yet, alas! full little I
Do think thereon that I must die," &c.

Robert Southwell was an English Jesuit, who was imprisoned, tortured, and finally, in Feb. 1598, tried in the King's Bench, convicted, and next day executed, for teaching the Roman Catholic tenets in England.—C.

⁴ This work, which Johnson was now reading, was, most probably, a little book, entitled *Baudi Epistolæ*, as, in his "Life of Milton," he has made a quotation from it.—D.

⁵ During our stay at this place, one day at dinner, I meant to please Mr. Johnson particularly with a dish of very young peas. "Are not they charming?" said I to him while he was eating them. "Perhaps they would be so—to a pig."—P.

⁶ Dr. Shipley had been a chaplain with the Duke of Cumberland, and probably now entertained Dr. Johnson with some anecdotes collected from his military acquaintance, by which Johnson was led to conclude that the "Duke of Marlborough's officers were useless;" that is, that the duke saw and did everything *himself*; a fact which, it is presumed, may be told of all great captains.—C.

⁷ The title of the poem is *Ποίημα νοστιτικόν*.—D.

⁸ Leland's Itinerary, published by Hearne, 1710.—D.

⁹ "A Journey to Mequinez, the Residence of the present Emperor of Fes and Morocco, on the Occasion of Commodore Stewart's Embassy thither, for the Redemption of Captives in 1721."—D

Trochaics to Bentley : they appeared inelegant, and made with difficulty—The Latin elegy contains only common-place, hastily expressed, so far as I have read, for it is long—They seem to be the verses of a scholar, who has no practice of writing—The Greek I did not always fully understand—I am in doubt about the sixth and last paragraphs ; perhaps they are not printed right, for *εὐτοκον* perhaps *εὐστοχον*. q?—The following days [11th, 12th, and 13th,] I read here and there—The *Bibliotheca Literaria* was so little supplied with papers that could interest curiosity, that it could not hope for long continuance¹—Wasse,² the chief contributor, was an unpolished scholar, who, with much literature, had no art or elegance of diction, at least in English.

Sunday, Aug. 14.—At Bodfari I heard the second lesson read, and the sermon preached in Welsh. The text was pronounced both in Welsh and English—The sound of the Welsh, in a continued discourse, is not unpleasant—*Βρῶσις ὀλιγη—καθ. α. φ.*³—The letter of Chrysostom, against transubstantiation—Erasmus to the Nuns, full of mystic notions and allegories.

Monday, Aug. 15.—*Καθ.*—*Imbecillitas genuum non sine aliquantulo doloris inter ambulandum, quem a prandio magis sensi.*⁴

Thursday, Aug. 18.—We left Llewenev, and went forwards on our journey—We came to Abergeley, a mean town, in which little but Welsh is spoken, and divine service is seldom performed in English—Our way then lay to the seaside, at the foot of a mountain, called Penmaen Rhôs—Here the way was so steep, that we walked on the lower edge of the hill, to meet the coach, that went upon a road higher on the hill—Our walk was not long, nor unpleasant : the longer I walk, the less I feel its inconvenience—As I grow warm, my breath mends, and I think my limbs grow pliable.

We then came to Conway ferry, and passed in small boats, with some passengers from the stage coach, among whom were an Irish gentlewoman, with two maids, and three little children, of which the youngest was only a few months old. The tide did not serve the large ferry-boat, and therefore our coach could not very soon follow us—We were, therefore, to stay at the inn. It is now the day of the race at Conway, and the town was so full of company, that no money could purchase lodgings. We were not very readily supplied with cold dinner. We would have staid at Conway if we could have found entertainment, for we were afraid of passing Penmaen Mawr, over which lay our way to Bangor, but by bright daylight, and the delay of our coach made our departure necessarily late. There was, however, no stay on any other terms, than of sitting up all night. The poor Irish lady was still more distressed—Her children wanted rest—She would have been content

¹ The *Bibliotheca Literaria* only extended to ten numbers.—D.

² Joseph Wasse was born in 1672, and died Dec. 18, 1738. He published an edition of *Sai* last, and contributed some papers to the *Philosophical Transactions*.

³ *Sic*, probably for *καθαρισ ἀφελης*.—C.

⁴ “A weakness of the knees, not without some pain in walking, which I feel increased after I have dined.”—D.

with but one bed, but, for a time none could be had—Mrs. Thrale gave her what help she could—At last two gentlemen were persuaded to yield up their room, with two beds, for which she gave half a guinea.

Our coach was at last brought, and we set out with some anxiety, but we came to Penmaen Mawr by daylight; and found a way, lately made, very easy, and very safe¹—It was cut smooth, and enclosed between parallel walls; the outer of which secures the passenger from the precipice, which is deep and dreadful—This wall is here and there broken by mischievous wantonness—The inner wall preserves the road from the loose stones, which the shattered steep above it would pour down—That side of the mountain seems to have a surface of loose stones, which every accident may crumble—The old road was higher, and must have been very formidable—The sea beats at the bottom of the way.

At evening the moon shone eminently bright; and our thoughts of danger being now past, the rest of our journey was very pleasant. At an hour somewhat late, we came to Bangor, where we found a very mean inn, and had some difficulty to obtain lodging—I lay in a room where the other bed had two men.

Friday, Aug. 19.—We obtained boats to convey us to Anglesey, and saw Lord Bulkeley's house, and Beaumaris Castle—I was accosted by Mr. Lloyd, the schoolmaster of Beaumaris, who had seen me at University College; and he, with Mr. Roberts, the register of Bangor, whose boat we borrowed, accompanied us. Lord Bulkeley's house² is very mean, but his garden is spacious and shady, with large trees and smaller interspersed—The walks are straight, and cross each other, with no variety of plan; but they have a pleasing coolness and solemn gloom, and extend to a great length. The castle is a mighty pile; the outward wall has fifteen round towers, besides square towers at the angles—There is then a void space between the wall and the castle, which has an area enclosed with a wall, which again has towers larger than those of the outer wall—The towers of the inner castle are, think, eight—There is likewise a chapel entire, built upon an arch, as I suppose, and beautifully arched with a stone roof, which is yet unbroken—The entrance into the chapel is about eight or nine feet high, and was, I suppose, higher, when there was no rubbish in the area—This castle corresponds with all the representations of romancing narratives. Here is not wanting the private passage, the dark cavity, the deep dungeon, or the lofty tower—We

¹ Penmaen Mawr is a huge rocky promontory, rising nearly 1550 feet perpendicular above the sea. Along a shelf of this precipice is formed an excellent road, well guarded, toward the sea, by a strong wall, supported in many parts by arches turned underneath it. Before this wall was built, travellers sometimes fell down the precipices.—D.

² Baron Hill is situated just above the town of Beaumaris, at the distance of three quarters of a mile, commanding so fine a view of the sea, and the coast of Caernarvon, that it has been sometimes compared to Mount Edgcombe, in Devonshire.—D.

did not discover the well—This is the most complete view that I have yet had of an old castle—It had a moat—The towers—We went to Bangor.

Saturday, Aug. 20.—We went by water from Bangor to Caernarvon, where we met Paoli and Sir Thomas Wynne¹—Meeting by chance with one Troughton² an intelligent and loquacious wanderer, Mr. Thrale invited him to dinner—He attended us to the castle, an edifice of stupendous magnitude and strength; it has in it all that we observed at Beaumaris, and much greater dimensions; many of the smaller rooms floored with stone are entire; of the larger rooms, the beams and planks are all left; this is the state of all building left to time—We mounted the eagle tower by one hundred and sixty-nine steps, each of ten inches—We did not find the well; nor did I trace the moat; but moats there were, I believe, to all castles on the plain, which not only hindered access, but prevented mines—We saw but a very small part of this mighty ruin, and in all these old buildings, the subterraneous works are concealed by the rubbish—To survey this place would take much time; I did not think there had been such buildings; it surpassed my ideas.

Sunday, Aug. 21.—[At Caernarvon].—We were at church; the service in the town is always English; at the parish-church at a small distance, always Welsh—The town has by degrees, I suppose, been brought nearer to the sea-side—We received an invitation to Dr. Worthington—We then went to dinner at Sir Thomas Wynne's,—the dinner mean, Sir Thomas civil, his lady nothing³—Paoli civil—We sipped with Colonel Wynne's lady, who lives in one of the towers of the castle—I have not been very well.

Monday, Aug. 22.—We went to visit Bodville,⁴ the place where Mrs. Thrale was born, and the churches called Tydweiliog and Llangwinodwl, which she holds by impropriation—We had an invitation to the house of Mr. Griffiths, of Bryn o dol, where we found a small neat new-built house, with square

¹ Sir Thomas Wynne, created Lord Newborough, 1776: died 1807.—D.

² Lieutenant Troughton I do recollect, loquacious and intelligent he was. He wore a uniform, and belonged, I think, to a man of war.—P. He was made a lieutenant in 1762, and died in 1786, in that rank: he was on half-pay, and did not belong to any ship when he met Dr. Johnson in 1774. It seems then that, even so late as this, half-pay officers wore their uniforms in the ordinary course of life.—C.

³ Lady Catharine Perceval, daughter of the second Earl of Egmont: this was, it appears, the lady of whom Mrs. Piozzi relates, that "For a lady of quality, since dead, who received us at her husband's seat in Wales with less attention than he had long been accustomed to, he had a rougher denunciation: 'That woman,' cried Johnson, 'is like sour small beer, the beverage of her table, and produce of the wretched country she lives in: like that, she could never have been a good thing, and even that bad thing is spoiled.'" And it is probably of her too that another anecdote is told: "We had been visiting at a lady's house, whom, as we returned, some of the company ridiculed for her ignorance:—'She is not ignorant,' said he, 'I believe, of anything she has been taught, or of anything she is desirous to know; and I suppose if one wanted a little *run tea*, she might be a proper person enough to apply to.'" Mrs. Piozzi says, in her MS. letters, "that Lady Catherine comes off well in the *diary*. K and many severe things of her, which he did not commit to paper." She died in 1782.—A

Situated among the mountains of Caernarvonshire.—P

rooms; the walls are of unhewn stone, and therefore thick; for the stones not fitting with exactness, are not strong without great thickness—He had planted a great deal of young wood in the walks—Fruit trees do not thrive; but having grown a few years, reach some barren stratum and wither—We found Mr. Griffiths not at home; but the provisions were good.

Tuesday, Aug. 23.—Mr. Griffiths came home the next day—He married a lady who has a house and estate at [Llanver], over against Anglesea and near Caernarvon, where she is more disposed, as it seems, to reside than at Bryndol—I read Lloyd's account of Mona, which he proves to be Anglesea—In our way to Bryndol, we saw at Llanerk a church built crosswise, very spacious and very magnificent for this country—We could not see the parson, and could get no intelligence about it.

Wednesday, Aug. 24.—We went to see Bodville—Mrs. Thrale remembered the rooms, and wandered over them with the recollection of her childhood—This species of pleasure is always melancholy—The walk was cut down, and the pond was dry—Nothing was better. We surveyed the churches, which are mean, and neglected to a degree scarcely imaginable—They have no pavement, and the earth is full of holes—The seats are rude benches; the altars have no rails—One of them has a breach in the roof—On the desk, I think, of each lay a folio Welsh Bible of the black letter, which the curate cannot easily read—Mr. Thrale purposes to beautify the churches, and, if he prospers, will probably restore the tithes—The two parishes are, Llangwinodyl and Tydweillio—The methodists are here very prevalent—A better church will impress the people with more reverence of public worship—Mrs. Thrale visited a house where she had been used to drink milk, which was left, with an estate of two hundred pounds a year, by one Lloyd, to a married woman who lived with him—We went to Pwlheli, a mean old town, at the extremity of the country—Here we bought something to remember the place.

Thursday, Aug. 25.—We returned to Caernarvon, where we eat with Mrs. Wynne.

Friday, Aug. 26.—We visited, with Mrs. Wynne,¹ Llyn Badarn and Llyn Berris, two lakes, joined by a narrow strait—They are formed by the waters which fall from Snowdon, and the opposite mountains—On the side of Snowdon are the remains of a large fort, to which we climbed with great labor—I was breathless and harassed—The lakes have no great breadth, so that the boat is always near one side or the other.—*Note.* *Queeny's* goats, one hundred and forty-nine, I think.²

¹ Mrs. Glynn Wynne, wife of Lord Newburgh's brother, who accompanied us, sang Welsh songs to the harp.—P.

² Mr. Thrale was near-sighted, and could not see the goats browsing on Snowdon, and he promised his daughter, who was a child of ten years old, a penny for every goat she would show him, and Dr. Johnson kept the account; so that it appears her father was in debt to her one hundred and forty-nine pence. *Queeny* was an epithet, which had its origin in the nursery, by which [in allusion to Queen Esther], Miss Thrale (whose name was Esther) was always distinguished by Johnson.—D.

Saturday, Aug. 27.—We returned to Bangor, where Mr. Thrale was lodged at Mr. Roberts's, the register.

Sunday, Aug. 28.—We went to worship at the cathedral—The quire is mean; the service was not well read.

Monday, Aug. 29.—We came to Mr. Myddelton's, of Gwynnynog, to the first place, as my Mistress observed, where we have been welcome.¹

Note.—On the day when we visited Bodville, we turned to the house of Mr. Griffiths, of Kefnamwycillh, a gentleman of large fortune, remarkable for having made great and sudden improvements in his seat and estate—he has enclosed a large garden with a brick wall—He is considered as a man of great accomplishments—He was educated in literature at the university, and served some time in the army, then quitted his commission, and retired to his lands. He is accounted a good man, and endeavours to bring the people to church.

In our way from Bangor to Conway, we passed again the new road upon the edge of Penmaen Mawr, which would be very tremendous, but that the wall shuts out the idea of danger—In the wall are several breaches, made, as Mr. Thrale very reasonably conjectures, by fragments of rocks which roll down the mountain, broken perhaps by frost, or worn through by rain. We then viewed Conway—To spare the horses at Penmaen Rhôs between Conway and St. Asaph, we sent the coach over the road cross the mountain with Mrs. Thrale, who had been tired with a walk some time before; and I, with Mr. Thrale and Miss, walked along the edge, where the path is very narrow, and much encumbered by little loose stones which had fallen down, as we thought, upon the way since we passed it before. At Conway we took a short survey of the castle, which afforded us nothing new—It is larger than that of Beaumaris, and less than that of Caernarvon—It is built upon a rock so high and steep, that it is even now very difficult of access—We found a round pit, which was called the Well; it is now almost filled, and therefore dry—We found the Well in no other castle—There are some remains of leaden pipes at Caernarvon, which I suppose, only conveyed water from one part of the building to another—Had the garrison had no other supply, the Welsh, who must know where the pipes were laid, could easily have cut them. We came to the house of Mr. Myddelton (on Monday,) where we staid to September 6, and were very kindly entertained—How we spent our time, I am not very able to tell²—We saw the wood, which is diversified and romantic.

¹ It is very likely I did say so. My relations were not quite as forward as I thought they might have been to welcome a long distant kinswoman. The Myddeltons were more cordial. The old colonel had been a fellow collegian with Mr. Thrale and Lord Sandys, of Ombersay.—P.

² However this may have been, he was both happy and amused, during his stay at Gwynnynog, and Mr. Myddelton was flattered by the honour of his visit. To perpetuate the recollection of it, he (to use Mr. Boswell's words) erected an urn on the banks of a rivulet, in the park, where Johnson delighted to stand and recite verses; on which is this inscription:—

"This spot was often dignified by the presence of SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL.D. whose Moral Writ

Sunday, Sept. 4.—We dined with Mr. Myddelton, the clergyman, at Denbigh, where I saw the harvest men very decently dressed, after the afternoon service, standing to be hired—On other days, they stand at about four in the morning—they are hired from day to day.

Tuesday, Sept. 6.—We lay at Wrexham; a busy, extensive, and well built town—it has a large and magnificent church. It has a famous fair.

Wednesday, Sept. 7.—We came to Chirk Castle.

Thursday, Sept. 8.—We came to the house of Dr. Worthington,² at Llanrhaidr¹—Our entertainment was poor, though his house was not bad. The situation is very pleasant, by the side of a small river, of which the bank rises high on the other side, shaded by gradual rows of trees—The gloom, the stream, and the silence, generate thoughtfulness. The town is old, and very mean, but has, I think, a market—In this house, the Welsh translation of the Old Testament was made—The Welsh singing psalms were written by Archdeacon Price—They are not considered as elegant, but as very literal, and accurate—We came to Llanrhaidr through Oswestry; a town not very little, nor very mean—the church, which I saw only at a distance, seems to be an edifice much too good for the present state of the place.

Friday, Sept. 9.—We visited the waterfall, which is very high, and in rainy weather very copious—There is a reservoir made to supply it—In its fall, it

ings, exactly conformable to the Precepts of Christianity, gave ardour to Virtue, and confidence to Truth.” In 1777, it would appear from a letter by Johnson to Mrs. Thrale, that he was informed that Mr. Myddelton meditated this honour, which seemed to be but little to his taste: “Mr. Myddelton’s erection of an urn looks like an intention to bury me alive; I would as willingly see my friend, however benevolent and hospitable, quietly inurned. Let him think, for the present, of some more acceptable memorial.”—D.

¹ It was probably on the 6th Sept., in the way from Wrexham to Chirk, that they passed through Ruabon, where the following occurrence took place: “A Welsh parson of mean abilities, though a good heart, struck with reverence at the sight of Dr. Johnson, whom he had heard of as the greatest man living, could not find any words to answer his inquiries concerning a motto round somebody’s arms which adorned a tombstone in Ruabon churchyard. If I remember right, the words were,

‘Heb Dw, Heb Dym,
Dw o’ diggon.’*

And though of no very difficult construction, the gentleman seemed wholly confounded, and unable to explain them; till Mr. Johnson, having picked out the meaning by little and little, said to the man, ‘*Heb* is a preposition, I believe, Sir, is it not?’ My countryman, recovering some spirits upon the sudden question, cried out, ‘So I humbly presume, Sir,’ very comically.”—P.

² Dr. Worthington died Oct. 6, 1778, aged 75.—D. Dr. Johnson thus notices his death in a letter to Mrs. Thrale: “My clerical friend Worthington is dead. I have known him long—and to die is dreadful. I believe he was a very good man.” Letters, vol. i. p. 86.—C.

³ Llanrhaidr means, *The Village of the Waterfall*, and takes its name from a spring, about a quarter of a mile from the church.—C.

* It is the Myddelton motto, and means,

Without God—without all
God is all-sufficient!—P.

has perforated a rock—There is a room built for entertainment—There was some difficulty in climbing to a near view—Lord Lyttelton¹ came near it, and turned back—When we came back, we took some cold meat, and notwithstanding the Doctor's importunities, went that day to Shrewsbury.

Saturday, Sept. 10.—I sent for Gwynn,² and he showed us the town—the walls are broken, and narrower than those of Chester—The town is large, and has many gentlemen's houses, but the streets are narrow—I saw Taylor's library—We walked in the quarry; a very pleasant walk by the river—Our inn was not bad.

Sunday, Sept. 11.—We were at St. Chads, a very large and luminous church—We were on the Castle Hill.

Monday, Sept. 12.—We called on Dr. Adams,³ and travelled towards Worcester, through Wenlock; a very mean place, though a borough—At noon, we came to Bridgenorth, and walked about the town, of which one part stands on a high rock, and part very low by the river—There is an old tower, which, being crooked, leans so much, that it is frightful to pass by it—In the afternoon we came through Kinver, a town in Staffordshire, neat and closely built—I believe it has only one street—The road was so steep and miry, that we were forced to stop at Hartlebury, where we had a very neat inn, though it made a very poor appearance.

Tuesday, Sept. 13.—We came to Lord Sandys's, at Ombersley, where we were treated with great civility⁴—The house is large—The hall is a very noble room.

Thursday, Sept. 15.—We went to Worcester, a very splendid city—The cathedral is very noble, with many remarkable monuments—The library is in the chapter-house—On the table lay the Nuremberg Chronicle, I think, of the first edition. We went to the china warehouse—The cathedral has a cloister—The long aisle is, in my opinion, neither so wide nor so high as that of Lichfield.

Friday, Sept. 16.—We went to Hagley, where we were disappointed of the respect and kindness that we expected.⁵

Saturday, Sept. 17.—We saw the house and park, which equalled my expectation—The house is one square mass—The offices are below—The rooms of elegance on the first floor, with two stories of bedchambers, very well dis-

¹ Thomas, the second Lord.—D.

² Mr. Gwynn, an architect of considerable celebrity, was a native of Shrewsbury, and was at this time completing a bridge across the Severn, called the English Bridge.—D.

³ The master of Pembroke College, Oxford; who was also Rector of St. Chads, in Shrewsbury.—D.

⁴ It was here that Johnson had as much wall-fruit as he wished, and, as he told Mrs. Thrale, for the only time in his life.—D.

⁵ This visit was not to Lord Lyttelton, but to his uncle [called Billy Lyttelton, afterwards, by successive creations, Lord Westcote, and Lord Lyttelton], the father of the present Lord, who lived at a house called Little Hagley.—D. This gentleman was an intimate friend of Mr. Thrale, and had some years before invited Johnson (through Mrs. Thrale) to visit him at Hagley.—D.

posed above it—The bedchambers have low windows, which abates the dignity of the house—The park has one artificial ruin, and wants water; there is, however, one temporary cascade¹—From the farthest hill there is a very wide prospect.

Sunday, Sept. 18.—I went to church—The church is, externally, very mean, and is, therefore diligently hidden by a plantation—There are in it several modern monuments of the Lytteltons.—There dined with us Lord Dudley, and Sir Edward Lyttelton, of Staffordshire, and his lady. They were all persons of agreeable conversation.—I found time to reflect on my birthday, and offered a prayer, which I hope was heard.

Monday, Sept. 19.—We made haste away from a place where all were offended²—In the way we visited the Leasowes—It was rain, yet we visited all the waterfalls—There are, in one place, fourteen falls in a short line—It is the next place to Ilam gardens—Poor Shenstone never tasted his pension—It is not very well proved that any pension was obtained for him³—I am afraid that he died of misery—We came to Birmingham, and I sent for Wheeler,⁴ whom I found well.

Tuesday, Sept. 20.—We breakfasted with Wheeler, and visited the manufacture of *Papier maché*—The paper which they use is smooth whited brown; the varnish is polished with rotten stone—Wheeler gave me a teaboard—We then went to Boulton's, who, with great civility, led us through his shops—I could not distinctly see his enginery—Twelve dozen of buttons for three shillings—Spoons struck at once.

Wednesday, Sept. 21.—Wheeler came to us again—We came easily to Wocstock.

Thursday, Sept. 22.—We saw Blenheim and Woodstock park—The park contains two thousand five hundred acres; about four square miles.—It has red deer—Mr. Bryant showed me the library with great civility—Durandi *Rationale* 1459.⁵ Lascaris' Grammar of the first edition, well printed, but

¹ He was enraged at artificial ruins and temporary cascades, so that I wonder at his leaving his opinion of them dubious; besides he hated the Lytteltons, and would rejoice at an opportunity of insulting them.—P.

² Mrs. Lyttelton, *ci-devant* Caroline Bristow, forced me to play at whist against my liking, and her husband took away Johnson's candle that he wanted to read by at the other end of the room. Those, I trust were the offences.—P.

³ Lord Loughborough applied to Lord Bute, to procure Shenstone a pension; but that it was ever asked of the king is not certain. He was made to believe that the patent was actually made out, when his death rendered unnecessary any further concern of his friends of his future ease and tranquillity.—ANDERSON.

⁴ Dr. Benjamin Wheeler; he was a native of Oxford, and originally on the foundation of Trinity College. He took his degree of A.M. Nov. 14, 1758, and D.D. July 6, 1770; and was a man of extensive learning. Dr. Johnson styles him, "My learned friend, the man with whom I most delighted to converse." Letters.—D.

⁵ This is a work written by William Durand, Bishop of Mende, and printed on vellum, in folio, by Fust and Schoeffer, in Ments, 1459. It is the third book that is known to be printed with a date.—D.

much less than later editions—The first *Batrachomyomachia*—The Duke sent Mr. Thrale partridges and fruit—At night we came to Oxford.

Friday, Sept. 23.—We visited Mr. Coulson—The ladies wandered about the university.

Saturday, Sept. 24.—Ka0.—We dined¹ with Mr. Coulson²—Vansittart told me his distemper—Afterwards we were at Burke's [at Beaconsfield], where we heard of the dissolution of the parliament³—We went home.

¹Of the dinner at University College I remember nothing, unless it was there that Mr. Vansittart, a flourishing sort of character, showed off his graceful form by fencing with Mr. Seward, who joined us at Oxford. We had a great dinner at Queen's College, and Dr. Johnson made Miss Thrale and me observe the ceremony of the grace-cup; but I have but a faint remembrance of it, and can in nowise tell who invited us, or how we came by our academical honor of hearing our healths drank in form, and I half believe in Latin.—P.

²Mr. Coulson was a senior Fellow of University College. Lord Stowell informs me that he was very eccentric. He would on a fine day hang out of the College windows his various pieces of apparel to air, which used to be universally answered by the young men hanging out from all the other windows quilts, carpets, rags, and every other kind of trash, and this was called an *Illumination*. His notions of the eminence and importance of his academic situation were so peculiar that, when he afterwards accepted a college living, he expressed to Lord Stowell his doubts whether, after living so long in the *great world*, he might not grow weary of the comparative retirement of a country parish.—C

³Dr. Johnson had always a very great personal regard and particular affection for Mr. Burke; and when at this time the general election broke up the delightful society in which we had spent some time at Beaconsfield, Dr. Johnson shook the hospitable master of the house kindly by the hand, and said, "Farewell, my dear Sir, and remember that I wish you all the success which ought to be wished you, which can possibly be wished you, indeed, *by an honest man*."—P.

CHAPTER III.

1774—1775.

Mr. Thrale's **val** Position—Johnson's "Patriot."—Death of young Col.—Mr. Perkins—**Foot's** **Tragedy**—Charlotte Lennox—Baretti's "Easy Lessons"—Case of Dr. Memis—Lord Hailes's "Annals"—Mary Queen of Scots—American Politics—Ossian—Letter to Macpherson—Personal Courage—Foote—Publishes "Journey to the Western Islands"—Mr. Knox—Mr. Tytler—Mr. Windham—Irish and Scotch Impudence compared—Ossian Controversy—Visit to Oxford.

PARLIAMENT having been dissolved, and his friend Mr. Thrale, who was a steady supporter of government, having again to encounter the storm of a contested election, he wrote a short pamphlet, entitled "The Patriot,"* addressed to the electors of Great Britain; a title which, to factious men who consider a patriot only as an opposer of the measures of government, will appear strangely misapplied. It was, however, written with energetic vivacity; and, except those passages in which it endeavours to vindicate the glaring outrage of the House of Commons in the case of the Middlesex election, and to justify the attempt to reduce our fellow-subjects in America to unconditional submission, it contained an admirable display of the properties of a real patriot, in the original and genuine sense;—a sincere, steady, rational, and unbiassed friend to the interests and prosperity of his king and country. It must be acknowledged, however, that both in this and his two former pamphlets, there was amidst many powerful arguments, not only a considerable portion of sophistry, but a contemptuous ridicule of his opponents, which was very provoking.

LETTER 193.

TO MR. PERKINS.¹

"October 25, 1774.

"SIR,—You may do me a very great favour. Mrs. Williams, a gentlewoman

¹ Mr. Perkins was for a number of years the worthy superintendent of Mr. Thrale's great brewery and after his death became one of the proprietors of it; and now resides at

whom you may have seen at Mr. Thrale's, is a petitioner for Mr. Hetherington's charity; petitions are this day issued at Christ's hospital.

"I am a bad manager of business in a crowd; and if I should send a mean man, he may be put away without his errand. I must, therefore, entreat that you will go, and ask for a petition for Anna Williams, whose paper of inquiries was delivered with answers at the counting-house of the hospital on Thursday the 20th. My servant will attend you thither, and bring the petition home when you have it.

"The petition which they are to give us, is a form which they deliver to every petitioner, and which the petitioner is afterwards to fill up, and return to them again. This we must have, or we cannot proceed according to their directions. You need, I believe, only ask for a petition; if they inquire for whom you ask, you can tell them.

"I beg pardon for giving you this trouble; but it is a matter of great importance. I am, Sir, your most humble servant,

"SAM JOHNSON."

LETTER 194.

TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"London, Oct. 27, 1774.

"DEAR SIR,—There has appeared lately in the papers an account of the boat upset between Mull and Ulva, in which many passengers were lost, and among them Maclean of Col. We, you know, were once drowned;¹ I hope, therefore, that the story is either wantonly or erroneously told. Pray satisfy me by the next post.

"I have printed 240 pages. I am able to do nothing much worth doing to dear Lord Hailes's book. I will, however, send back the sheets; and hope, by degrees, to answer all your reasonable expectations.

"Mr. Thrale has happily surmounted a very violent and acrimonious opposition; but all joys have their abatement; Mrs. Thrale has fallen from her horse, and hurt herself very much. The rest of our friends I believe, are well. My compliments to Mrs. Boswell.—I am, Sir, your most affectionate servant,

"SAM JOHNSON."

This letter, which shows his tender concern for an amiable young gentleman to whom he had been very much obliged in the Hebrides,

Mr. Thrale's house in Southwark, which was the scene of so many literary meetings, and in which he continues the liberal hospitality for which it was eminent. Dr. Johnson esteemed him much. He hung up in the counting-house a fine proof of the admirable mezzotinto of Dr. Johnson, by Doughty; and when Mrs. Thrale asked him somewhat flippantly, "Why do you put him up in the counting-house?" He answered, "Because, Madam, I wish to have one wise man there." "Sir," said Johnson, "I thank you. It is a very handsome compliment, and I believe you speak sincerely."

¹ In the newspapers.

I have inserted according to its date, though before receiving it I had informed him of the melancholy event that the young Laird of Col was unfortunately drowned.

LETTER 195.

TO JAMES ROSWELL, ESQ.

"Nov. 26, 1774.

"DEAR SIR,—Last night I corrected the last page of our 'Journey to the Hebrides.' The printer has detained it all this time, for I had, before I went into Wales, written all except two sheets. 'The Patriot' was called for by my political friends on Friday, was written on Saturday, and I have heard little of it. So vague are conjectures at a distance.¹ As soon as I can, I will take care that copies be sent to you, for I would wish that they might be given before they are bought: but I am afraid that Mr. Strahan will send to you and to the booksellers at the same time. Trade is as diligent as courtesy. I have mentioned all that you recommended. Pray make my compliments to Mrs. Boswell and the younglings. The club has, I think, not yet met. Tell me, and tell me honestly, what you think and what others say of our travels. Shall we touch the continent?²—I am, dear Sir, your most humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

In his manuscript diary of this year, there is the following entry :—

Nov. 27. Advent Sunday. I considered that this day, being the beginning of the ecclesiastical year, was a proper time for a new course of life. I began to read the Greek Testament regularly at one hundred and sixty verses every Sunday. This day I began the Acts.—"In this week I read Virgil's Pastorals. I ~~learned~~ to repeat the *Pollio* and *Gallus*. I read carelessly the first *Georgic*."

Such evidences of his unceasing ardour, both for "divine and human lore," when advanced into his sixty-fifth year, and notwithstanding his many disturbances from disease, must make us at once honour his spirit, and lament that it should be so grievously clogged by its material tegument. It is remarkable that he was very fond of the precision which calculation produces. Thus we find in one of his manuscript diaries, "12 pages in 4to. Gr. Test. and 30 pages in Beza's folio, comprise the whole in 40 days."

¹ Alluding to a passage in a letter of mine, where, speaking of his "Journey to the Hebrides," I say, "But has not 'The Patriot' been an interruption, by the time taken to write it, and the time luxuriously spent in listening to its applauses?"

² We had projected a voyage together up the Baltic, and talked of visiting some of the more northern regions.

LETTER 196.

TO JOHN HOOLE, ESQ.¹

"December 19, 1774.

"DEAR SIR,—I have returned your play,² which you will find underscored with red, where there was a word which I did not like. The red will be washed off with a little water. The plot is so well framed, the intricacy so artful and the disentanglement so easy, the suspense so affecting, and the passionate parts so properly interposed, that I have no doubt of its success.—I am, Sir, your most humble servant,

"SAM JOHNSON."

The first effort of his pen in 1775, was "Proposals for publishing the Works of Mrs. Charlotte Lennox," † in three volumes quarto. In his diary, January 2, I find this entry:—"Wrote Charlotte's Proposals." But, indeed, the internal evidence would have been quite sufficient. Her claim to the favour of the public was thus enforced:—

"Most of the pieces, as they appeared singly, have been read with approbation, perhaps above their merits but of no great advantage to the writer. She hopes, therefore, that she shall not be considered as too indulgent to vanity or too studious of interest, if from that labour which has hitherto been chiefly gainful to others, she endeavours to obtain at last some profits to herself and her children. She cannot decently enforce her claim by the praise of her own performances: nor can she suppose, that by the most artful and laboured address, any additional notice could be procured to a publication, of which her Majesty has condescended to be the patroness."

He this year also wrote the Preface to Baretti's "Easy Lessons in Italian and English." †

LETTER 197.

TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"Jan. 14, 1775

"DEAR SIR,—You never did ask for a book by the post till now, and I do not think on it. You see now it is done. I sent one to the king, and I hear he likes it. I shall send a parcel into Scotland for presents, and intend to give to many of my friends. In your catalogue you left out Lord Auchinleck.—Let me know, as fast as you read it, how you like it; and let me know

¹ John Hoole, who, from this time forward will be found much in Johnson's society, was the son of a watchmaker, born in Dec. 1737. He was a clerk in the India House, but devoted his leisure to literature. He published translations of Tasso's *Jerusalem* and Ariosto's *Orlando*. He died in 1808.—C.

² *Cleonice*.—B. It was produced at Covent Garden, in March, 1775, but without success; in consequence of which Hoole returned to the publisher a part of the money he had received for the copyright.

if any mistake is committed, or anything important left out. I wish you could have seen the sheets. My compliments to Mrs. Boswell, and to Veronica, and to all my friends.—I am, Sir, your most humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 198.

FROM MR. BOSWELL.

"Edinburgh, Jan. 19. 1775.

"Be pleased to accept of my best thanks for your 'Journey to the Hebrides,' which came to me by last night's post. I did really ask the favour twice; but you have been even with me by granting it so speedily. *Bis dat qui cito dat*. Though ill of a bad cold, you kept me up the greatest part of last night: for I did not stop till I had read every word of your book. I looked back to our first talking of a visit to the Hebrides, which was many years ago, when sitting by ourselves in the Mitre tavern in London, I think about *witching time o' night*; and then exulted in contemplating our scheme fulfilled, and a *monumentum perenne* of it erected by your superior abilities. I shall only say, that your book has afforded me a high gratification. I shall afterwards give you my thoughts on particular passages. In the meantime, I hasten to tell you of your having mistaken two names, which you will correct in London, as I shall do here, that the gentlemen who deserve the valuable compliments which you have paid them may enjoy their honours. In p. 106, for *Gordon* read *Murchison*; and in p. 357, for *Maclean* read *Macleod*.

"But I am now to apply to you for immediate aid in my profession, which you have never refused to grant when I requested it. I enclose you a petition for Dr. Memis, a physician at Aberdeen, in which Sir John Dalrymple has exerted his talents, and which I am to answer as counsel for the managers of the royal infirmary in that city. Mr. Jopp, the provost, who delivered to you your freedom, is one of my clients, and as a citizen of Aberdeen, you will support him.

"The fact is shortly this. In a translation of the charter of the infirmary from Latin into English, made under the authority of the managers, the same phrase in the original is in one place rendered *physician*, but when applied to Dr. Memis is rendered *doctor of medicine*. Dr. Memis complained of this before the translation was printed, but was not indulged with having it altered; and he has brought an action for damages, on account of a supposed injury, as if the designation given to him was an inferior one, tending to make it be supposed he is *not a physician*, and consequently to hurt his practice. My father has dismissed the action as groundless, and now he has appealed to the whole court."¹

¹ In the court of sessions of Scotland an action is first tried by one of the judges, who is called the Lord Ordinary: and if either party is dissatisfied, he may appeal to the whole court, consisting of fifteen, the Lord President, and fourteen other judges, who have both in and out of court the title of Lords from the name of their estates; as, Lord Auchinleck, Lord Monboddo, &c.

LETTER 199.

TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

Jan. 21, 1770

"DEAR SIR,—I long to hear how you like the book; it is, I think, much liked here. But Macpherson is very furious; can you give me any more intelligence about him, or his Fingal? Do what you can, and do it quickly. Is Lord Hailes on our side? Pray let me know what I owed you when I left you, that I may send it to you.

"I am going to write about the Americans. If you have picked up any hints among your lawyers, who are great masters of the law of nations, or if your own mind suggests anything, let me know. But mum, it is a secret.—I will send your parcel of books as soon as I can; but I cannot do as I wish. However, you find everything mentioned in the book, which you recommended.

"Langton is here; we are all that ever we were. He is a worthy fellow, without malice, though not without resentment. Poor Beauclerk is so ill that his life is thought to be in danger. Lady Di nurses him with very great assiduity. Reynolds has taken too much to strong liquor,¹ and seems to delight in his new character.

"This is all the news that I have; but as you love verses, I will send you a few which I made upon Inchkenneth; but remember the condition—you shall not show them, except to Lord Hailes, whom I love better than any man whom I know so little. If he asks you to transcribe them for him, you may do it, but I think he must promise not to let them be copied again, nor to show them as mine.

"I have at last sent back Lord Hailes's sheets. I never think about returning them, because I alter nothing. You will see that I might as well have kept them. However, I am ashamed of my delay; and if I have the honour of receiving any more, promise punctually to return them by the next post. Make my compliments to dear Mrs. Boswell, and to Miss Veronica. I am, dear Sir, yours most faithfully,

"SAM. JOHNSON."²

¹ It should be recollected that this fanciful description of his friend was given by Johnson after he himself had become a water-drinker.—B. Johnson had been a water-drinker ever since 1766, and therefore, *that* could not be his motive for making, nine years after, an observation on Sir Joshua's "*new character*." Sir Joshua was *always* convivial, and this expression was either an allusion to some little anecdote now forgotten, or arose out of that odd fancy which Johnson (perhaps from his own morbid feelings) entertained, that every one who drank wine, in any quantity whatsoever, was more or less drunk.—C.

² He now sent me a Latin inscription for my historical picture, Mary, Queen of Scots, and afterwards favoured me with an English translation. Mr. Alderman Boydell, that eminent patron of the arts, has subjoined them to the engraving from my picture:—

"*Maria, Scotorum Regina, hominum seditiosorum contumellis lassata, minis territa, clamoribus victa, libello, per quem regno cedit, lacrimans trepidansque nomen apponit.*"

"Mary, Queen of Scots, harassed, terrified and overpowered by the insults, menaces, and clamours of her rebellious subjects, sets her hand, with tears and confusion, to a resignation of the kingdom."

LETTER 200.

FROM MR. BOSWELL.

"Edinburgh, Jan. 2^d, 1775.

"You rate our lawyers here too high, when you call them great masters of the law of nations. . . . As for myself, I am ashamed to say I have read little and thought little on the subject of America. I will be much obliged to you, if you will direct me where I shall find the best information of what is to be said on both sides. It is a subject vast in its present extent and future consequences. The imperfect hints which now float in my mind tend rather to the formation of an opinion that our government has been precipitant and severe in the resolution taken against the Bostonians. Well do you know that I have no kindness for that race. But nations, or bodies of men, should, as well as individuals, have a fair trial, and not be condemned on character alone. Have we not express contracts with our colonies, which afford a more certain foundation of judgment, than general political speculations on the mutual rights of states and their provinces or colonies? Pray let me know immediately what to read, and I shall diligently endeavour to gather for you anything that I can find. Is Burke's speech on American taxation published by himself? Is it authentic? I remember to have heard you say, that you had never considered East Indian affairs; though, surely, they are of much importance to Great Britain. Under the recollection of this, I shelter myself from the reproach of ignorance about the Americans. If you write upon the subject, I shall certainly understand it. But, since you seem to expect that I should know something of it, without your instruction, and that my own mind should suggest something, I trust you will put me in the way.

What does Becket mean by the *Originals* of Fingal and other poems of Ossian, which he advertises to have lain in his shop?"

LETTER 201.

TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"Jan. 28, 1775.

"DEAR SIR,—You sent me a case to consider, in which I have no facts but what are against us, nor any principles on which to reason. It is vain to try to write thus without materials. The fact seems to be against you; at least I cannot know or say anything to the contrary. I am glad that you like the book so well. I hear no more of Macpherson. I shall long to know what Lord Hailes says of it. Lend it him privately. I shall send the parcel as soon as I can. Make my compliments to Mrs. Boswell. I am, Sir, &c.,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 202.

FROM MR. BOSWELL.

"Edinburgh, Feb. 2, 1775.

"As to Macpherson, I am anxious to have from yourself a full and pointed account of what has passed between you and him. It is confidently told here, that before your book came out he sent to you, to let you know that he understood you meant to deny the authenticity of Ossian's poems; that the originals were in his possession; that you might have inspection of them, and might

take the evidence of people skilled in the Erse language; and that he hoped, after this fair offer, you would not be so uncandid as to assert that he had refused reasonable proof. That you paid no regard to his message, but published your strong attack upon him; and then he wrote a letter to you, in such terms as he thought suited to one who had not acted as a man of veracity. You may believe it gives me pain to hear your conduct represented as unfavourable, while I can only deny what is said, on the ground that your character refutes it, without having any information to oppose. Let me, I beg it of you, be furnished with a sufficient answer to any calumny upon this occasion.

"Lord Hailes writes to me (for we correspond more than we talk together), 'As to Fingal, I see a controversy arising, and purpose to keep out of its way. There is no doubt that I might mention some circumstances; but I do not choose to commit them to paper.'¹ What his opinion is I do not know. He says, 'I am singularly obliged to Dr. Johnson for his accurate and useful criticisms. Had he given some strictures on the general plan of the work, it would have added much to his favours.' He is charmed with your verses on Inchkenneth, says they are very elegant, but bids me tell you, he doubts whether—

'Legitimas faciunt pectora pura preces'

be according to the rubric; but that is your concern; for, you know, he is a Presbyterian."

LETTER 203.

TO DR. LAWRENCE.²

"Feb. 7, 1775.

"SIR,—One of the Scotch physicians is now prosecuting a corporation that in some public instrument has styled him *doctor of medicine* instead of *physician*. Boswell desires, being advocate for the corporation, to know whether *doctor of medicine* is not a legitimate title, and whether it may be considered as a disadvantageous distinction. I am to write to-night; be pleased to tell me. I am, Sir, your most, &c.,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 204.

TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"Feb. 7, 1775.

"MY DEAR BOSWELL,—I am surprised that, knowing as you do the disposition of your countrymen to tell lies in favour of each other,³ you can be at all affected by any reports that circulate among them. Macpherson never in his life offered me a sight of any original or of any evidence of any kind; but

¹ His lordship, notwithstanding his resolution, did commit his sentiments to paper, and in one of his notes to his Collection of Old Scottish Poetry, says, "to doubt the authenticity of those poems is a refinement in scepticism indeed."—J. BOSWELL, Jun.

² The learned and worthy Dr. Lawrence, whom Dr. Johnson respected and loved, as his physician and friend.

³ My friend has, in this letter, relied upon my testimony, with a confidence, the ground of which has escaped my recollection.

thought only of intimidating me by noise and threats, till my last answer—that *I would not be deterred from detecting what I thought a cheat, by the menaces of a ruffian*—put an end to our correspondence.

"The state of the question is this. He, and Dr. Blair, whom I consider as deceived, say, that he copied the poem from old manuscripts. His copies, if he had them, and I believe him to have none, are nothing. Where are the manuscripts? They can be shown if they exist, but they were never shown. *De non existentibus et non apparentibus*, says our law, *eadem est ratio*. No man has a claim to credit upon his own word, when better evidence, if he had it, may be easily produced. But so far as we can find, the Erse language was never written till very lately for the purposes of religion. A nation that cannot write, or a language that was never written, has no manuscripts.

"But whatever he has he never offered to show. If old manuscripts should now be mentioned, I should, unless there were more evidence than can be easily had, suppose them another proof of Scotch conspiracy in national falsehood. Do not censure the expression; you know it to be true.

"Dr. Memis's question is so narrow as to allow no speculation; and I have no facts before me but those which his advocate has produced against you. I consulted this morning the President of the London College of Physicians, who says, that with us, *doctor of physic* (we do not say *doctor of medicine*) is the highest title that a practiser of physic can have; that *doctor* implies not only *physician*, but teacher of physic; that every *doctor* is legally a *physician*; but no man, not a *doctor*, can *practice physic* but by *licence* particularly granted. The doctorate is a licence of itself. It seems to us a very slender cause of prosecution.

"I am now engaged, but in a little time I hope to do all you would have. My compliments to Madam and Veronica. I am, Sir, your most humble servant,
SAM. JOHNSON."

What words were used by Mr. Macpherson in his letter to the venerable sage, I have never heard; but they are generally said to have been of a nature very different from the language of literary contest. Dr. Johnson's answer appeared in the newspapers of the day, and has since been frequently republished; but not with perfect accuracy. I give it as dictated to me by himself, written down in his presence, and authenticated by a note in his own handwriting, "*This, I think, is a true copy.*"¹

LETTER 205.

TO MR. MACPHERSON.

"MR. JAMES MACPHERSON,—I received your foolish and impudent letter. Any violence offered me I shall do my best to repel; and what I cannot do for

¹ I have deposited it in the British Museum.

myself, the law shall do for me. I hope I never shall be deterred from detecting what I think a cheat, by the menaces of a ruffian.

"What would you have me retract? I thought your book an imposture; I think it an imposture still. For this opinion I have given my reasons to the public, which I here dare you to refute. Your rage I defy. Your abilities, since your *Homer*, are not so formidable; and what I hear of your morals inclines me to pay regard not to what you shall say, but to what you shall prove. You may print this if you will.

"SAM. JOHNSON."

Mr. Macpherson little knew the character of Dr. Johnson, if he supposed that he could be easily intimidated; for no man was ever more remarkable for personal courage. He had, indeed, an awful dread of death, or rather, "of something after death:" and what rational man, who seriously thinks of quitting all that he has ever known, and going into a new and unknown state of being, can be without that dread? But his fear was from reflection; his courage natural. His fear, in that one instance, was the result of philosophical and religious consideration. He feared death, but he feared nothing else, not even what might occasion death.¹

Many instances of his resolution may be mentioned. One day, at Mr. Beauclerk's house in the country, when two large dogs were fighting, he went up to them, and beat them till they separated; and at another time, when told of the danger there was that a gun might burst if charged with many balls, he put in six or seven, and fired it off against a wall. Mr. Langton told me, that when they were swimming together near Oxford, he cautioned Dr. Johnson against a pool, which was reckoned particularly dangerous; upon which Johnson directly swam into it. He told me himself that one night he was attacked in the street by four men, to whom he would not yield, but kept them all at bay, till the watch came

¹ Fear was indeed a sensation to which Mr. Johnson was an utter stranger, excepting when some sudden apprehensions seized him that he was going to die; and even then he kept all his wits about him, to express the most humble and pathetic petitions to the Almighty: and when the first paralytic stroke took his speech from him, he instantly set about composing a prayer in Latin, at once to deprecate God's mercy, to satisfy himself that his mental powers remained unimpaired, and to keep them in exercise, that they might not perish by permitted stagnation. When one day he had at my house taken tincture of antimony instead of emetic wine, for a vomit, he was himself the person to direct what to do for him, and managed with as much coolness and deliberation as he had been prescribing for an indifferent person.

up, and carried both him and them to the round house. In the playhouse at Lichfield, as Mr. Garrick informed me, Johnson having for a moment quitted a chair which was placed for him between the side-scenes, a gentleman took possession of it, and, when Johnson on his return civilly demanded his seat, rudely refused to give it up; upon which Johnson laid hold of it, and tossed him and the chair into the pit.¹ Foote, who has so successfully revived the old comedy, by exhibiting living characters, had resolved to imitate Johnson on the stage, expecting great profits from his ridicule of so celebrated a man. Johnson being informed of his intention, and being at dinner at Mr. Thomas Davies's, the bookseller, from whom I had the story, he asked Mr. Davies, "what was the common price of an oak stick?" and being answered sixpence, "Why then, Sir, said he "give me leave to send your servant to purchase me a shilling one. I'll have a double quantity; for I am told Foote means to *take me off*, as he calls it, and I am determined the fellow shall not do it with impunity." Davies took care to acquaint Foote of this, which effectually checked the wantonness of the mimic. Mr. Macpherson's menaces made Johnson provide himself with the same implement of defence; and had he been attacked, I have no doubt that, old as he was, he would have made his corporal prowess be felt as much as his intellectual.

His "Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland"* is a most valuable performance. It abounds in extensive philosophical views of society, and in ingenious sentiment and lively description. A considerable part of it, indeed, consists of speculations, which many years before he saw the wild regions which we visited together probably had employed his attention, though the actual sight of those scenes undoubtedly quickened and augmented them. Mr. Orme, the very able historian, agreed with me in this opinion, which he thus strongly expressed: "There are in that book thoughts, which, by long revolution in the great mind of Johnson, have been formed and polished like pebbles rolled in the ocean!"

¹ If Mrs. Piozzi had reported any statement so obviously exaggerated as this, Mr. Boswell would have been very indignant.—O.

² Robert Orme, Esq., the historian of Hindostan, was born at Anjengo, in the Travance country, in 1728. and died at Ealing, in 1801.

That he was to some degree of excess a *true born Englishman*, so as to have entertained an undue prejudice against both the country and the people of Scotland, must be allowed. But it was a prejudice of the head, and not of the heart.¹ He had no ill will to the Scotch ; for, if he had been conscious of that, he never would have thrown himself into the bosom of their country, and trusted to the protection of its remote inhabitants with a fearless confidence. His remark upon the nakedness of the country, from its being denuded of trees, was made after having travelled two hundred miles along the eastern coast, where certainly trees are not to be found near the road ; and he said it was “ a map of the road ” which he gave. His disbelief of the authenticity of the poems ascribed to Ossian, a Highland bard, was confirmed in the course of his journey, by a very strict examination of the evidence offered for it ; and although their authenticity was made too much a national point by the Scotch, there were many respectable persons in that country, who did not concur in this ; so that his judgment upon the question ought not to be decried, even by those who differ from him. As to myself, I can only say, upon a subject now become very uninteresting, that when the fragments of Highland poetry first came out, I was much pleased with their wild peculiarity, and was one of those who subscribed to enable their editor, Mr. Macpherson, then a young man, to make a search in the Highlands and Hebrides for a long poem in the Erse language, which was reported to be preserved somewhere in those regions. But when there came forth an Epic poem in six books, with all the common circumstances of former compositions of that nature ; and when, upon an attentive examination of it, there was found a perpetual recurrence of the same images which appear in the fragments ; and when no ancient manuscript, to authenticate the work, was deposited in any public library, though that was insisted on as a reasonable proof ; *who* could forbear to doubt ?

Johnson's grateful acknowledgments of kindness received in the

¹ This is a distinction which I am not sure that I understand. Did Mr. Boswell think that he improved the case by representing Johnson's dislike of Scotland as the result not of *feeling* but of *reason* ? In truth, in the printed Journal of his Tour, there is nothing that a fair and liberal Scotchman can or does complain of ; but his conversation is full of the harshest and often most unjust sarcasms against the Scotch, nationally and individually.—C.

course of this tour completely refute the brutal reflections which have been thrown out against him, as if he had made an ungrateful return ; and his delicacy in sparing in his book those who we find, from his letters to Mrs. Thrale, were just objects of censure,¹ is much to be admired.² His candour and amiable disposition is conspicuous from his conduct, when informed by Mr. Macleod, of Rasay, that he had committed a mistake, which gave that gentleman some uneasiness. He wrote him a courteous and kind letter, and inserted in the newspapers an advertisement, correcting the mistake.

The observations of my friend Mr. Dempster in a letter written to me, soon after he had read Dr. Johnson's book, are so just and liberal, that they cannot be too often repeated :—

"There is nothing in the book, from beginning to end, that a Scotchman need to take amiss. What he says of the country is true ; and his observations on the people are what must naturally occur to a sensible, observing, and reflecting inhabitant of a convenient metropolis, where a man on thirty pounds a year may be better accommodated with all the little wants of life, than Col. or Sir Allan. I am charmed with his researches concerning the Erse language, and the antiquity of their manuscripts. I am quite convinced ; and I shall rank Ossian and his Fingals and Oscars amongst the nursery tales, not the true history of our country, in all time to come.

"Upon the whole, the book cannot displease, for it has no pretensions. The author neither says he is a geographer, nor an antiquarian, nor very learned in the history of Scotland, nor a naturalist, nor a fossilist. The manners of the people, and the face of the country, are all he attempts to describe, or seems to have thought of. Much were it to be wished, that they who have travelled into more remote, and of course more curious regions, had all possessed his good sense. Of the state of learning, his observations on Glasgow University show he has formed a very sound judgment. He understands our climate too ; and he has accurately observed the changes, however slow and imperceptible to us, which Scotland has undergone, in consequence of the blessings of liberty and internal peace."

Mr. Knox, another native of Scotland, who has since made the same tour, and published an account of it, is equally liberal.

¹ Sir Archibald Macdonald.—C.

² We have seen his kind acknowledgment of Macleod's hospitality, and the loss of poor Col. is recorded in his Journal in affectionate and pathetic terms.

"I have read," says he, "his book again and again, travelled with him from Berwick to Glenelg, through countries with which I am well acquainted; sailed with him from Glenelg to Rasay, Sky, Rum, Coll, Mull, and Icolmkill, but have not been able to correct him in any matter of consequence. I have often admired the accuracy, the precision, and the justness of what he advances, respecting both the country and the people.—The Doctor has everywhere delivered his sentiments with freedom, and in many instances with a seeming regard for the benefit of the inhabitants, and the ornament of the country. His remarks on the want of trees and hedges for shade, as well as for shelter to the cattle, are well founded, and merit the thanks, not the illiberal censure of the natives. He also felt for the distresses of the Highlanders, and explodes with great propriety the bad management of the grounds, and the neglect of timber in the Hebrides."

Having quoted Johnson's just compliments on the Rasay family, he says,—

"On the other hand, I found this family equally lavish in their encomiums upon the Doctor's conversation, and his subsequent civilities to a young gentleman of that country, who, upon waiting upon him at London, was well received, and experienced all the attention and regard that a warm friend could bestow. Mr. Macleod having also been in London, waited upon the Doctor, who provided a magnificent and expensive entertainment in honour of his old Hebridean acquaintance."

And talking of the military road by Fort Augustus, he says,—

"By this road, though one of the most rugged in Great Britain, the celebrated Dr. Johnson passed from Inverness to the Hebride Isles. His observations on the country and people are extremely correct, judicious, and instructive."—p. 103.

Mr. Tytler, the acute and able vindicator of Mary Queen of Scots, in one of his letters to Mr. James Elphinstone, published in that gentleman's "Forty Years' Correspondence," says,—

"I read Dr. Johnson's 'Tour' with very great pleasure. Some few errors he has fallen into, but of no great importance, and those are lost in the numberless beauties of his work. If I had leisure, I could perhaps point out the most exceptionable places; but at present I am in the country, and have not his book at hand. It is plain he meant to speak well of Scotland; and he has in my apprehension done us great honour in the most capital article, the character of the inhabitants."

¹ Boswell was so vehemently attacked by his countrymen, as if he were *particeps criminis* with Dr. Johnson, that he thought it expedient to produce these *testimonia Scotorum* in his own defence.—O.

His private letters to Mrs. Thrale, written during the course of his journey, which therefore may be supposed to convey his genuine feelings at the time, abound in such benignant sentiment towards the people who showed him civilities, that no man whose temper is not very harsh and sour can retain a doubt of the goodness of his heart.

It is painful to recollect with what rancour he was assailed by numbers of shallow irritable North Britons, on account of his supposed injurious treatment of their country and countrymen, in his "Journey." Had there been any just ground for such a charge, would the virtuous and candid Dempster have given his opinion of the book, in the terms in which I have quoted? Would the patriotic Knox¹ have spoken of it as he has done? Would Mr. Tytler, surely

"— a Scot if ever Scot there were,"

have expressed himself thus? And let me add, that, citizen of the world as I hold myself to be, I have that degree of predilection for my *natale solum*, nay, I have that just sense of the merit of an ancient nation, which has been ever renowned for its valour, which in former times maintained its independence against a powerful neighbour, and in modern times has been equally distinguished for its ingenuity and industry in civilized life, that I should have felt a generous indignation at any injustice done to it. Johnson treated Scotland no worse than he did even his best friends, whose characters he used to give as they appeared to him, both in light and shade. Some people, who had not exercised their minds sufficiently, condemned him for censuring his friends. But Sir Joshua Reynolds, whose philosophical penetration and justness of thinking were not less known to those who lived with him, than his genius in his art admired by the world, explained his conduct thus :

"He was fond of discrimination, which he could not show without pointing out the bad as well as the good in every character; and as his friends were

¹ I observed with much regret, while the first edition was passing through the press (August, 1790), that this ingenious gentleman is dead.—B. Mr. John Knox was, for many years, a bookseller of some eminence in the Strand. Besides the Tour to the Hebrides, he published a "View of the British Empire," and several works having for their object the improvement of the Scottish Fisheries. He died at Dalkeith.

those whose characters he knew best, they afforded him the best opportunity for showing the acuteness of his judgment."

He expressed to his friend, Mr. Windham of Norfolk,¹ his wonder at the extreme jealousy² of the Scotch, and their resentment at having their country described by him as it really was; when to say that it was a country as good as England would have been a gross falsehood. "None of us," said he, "would be offended if a foreigner who has travelled here should say, that vines and olives don't grow in England." And as to his prejudice against the Scotch, which I always ascribed to that nationality which he observed in *them*, he said to the same gentlemen, "When I find a Scotchman, to whom an Englishman is as a Scotchman, that Scotchman shall be as an Englishman to me." His intimacy with many gentlemen of Scotland, and his employing so many natives of that country as his amanuenses, prove that his prejudice was not virulent; and I have deposited in the British Museum, amongst other pieces of his writing, the following note in answer to one from me, asking if he would meet me at dinner at the Mitre, though a friend of mine, a Scotchman, was to be there:

"Mr. Johnson does not see why Mr. Boswell should suppose a Scotchman less acceptable than any other man. He will be at the Mitre."

My much-valued friend Dr. Barnard, now Bishop of Killaloe, having once expressed to him an apprehension, that if he should visit Ireland he might treat the people of that country more unfavourably than he had done the Scotch, he answered, with strong pointed double-edged wit, "Sir, you have no reason to be afraid of me. The Irish are not in a conspiracy to cheat the world by false representations of the merits of their countrymen. No, Sir: the Irish are a *fair people*;—they never speak well of one another."³

¹ The Right Hon. William Windham of Felbrigg, born 1750, died 1810. He cultivated Johnson's acquaintance for the last few years of his life with great assiduity, as will be seen in the sequel of this work.—C.

² We may be allowed to express our wonder at the *extreme* prejudice of Johnson against Scotland and the Scotch; which is the more surprising, because he was himself a *Jacobite*, and many of his earliest acquaintances and some of his nearest friends were Scotch. I have a strong suspicion that there was some *personal* cause for this unreasonable and, as it appears, *unaccountable* antipathy.—C.

³ Johnson one day asked me, "Have you observed the difference between your own coun-

Johnson told me of an instance of Scottish nationality, which made a very unfavourable impression upon his mind. A Scotchman of some consideration in London solicited him to recommend by the weight of his learned authority, to be master of an English school, a person of whom he who recommended him confessed he knew no more but that he was his countryman. Johnson was shocked at this unconscientious conduct.

All the miserable cavillings against his "Journey," in newspapers, magazines, and other fugitive publications, I can speak from certain knowledge, only furnished him with sport. At last there came out a scurrilous volume,¹ larger than Johnson's own, filled with malignant abuse, under a name, real or fictitious, of some low man in an obscure corner of Scotland, though supposed to be the work of another Scotchman, who has found means to make himself well known both in Scotland and England. The effect which it had upon Johnson was, to produce this pleasant observation to Mr. Seward, to whom he lent the book: "This fellow must be a block-head. They don't know how to go about their abuse. Who will read a five shilling book against me? No, Sir, if they had wit, they should have kept pelting me with pamphlets."

LETTER 206.

FROM MR. BOSWELL.

"Edinburgh, Feb. 18, 1775.

"You would have been very well pleased if you had dined with me to-day. I had for my guests, Macquharrie, young Maclean of Col, the successor of our friend, a very amiable man, though not marked with such active qualities as his brother; Mr. Maclean of Torloisk in Mull,² a gentleman of Sir Allan's family; and two of the clan Grant; so that the Highland and Hebridean genius reigned. We had a great deal of conversation about you, and drank your

try impudence and Scotch impudence?" The answer being in the negative; "Then I will tell you," said Johnson: "the impudence of an Irishman is the impudence of a fly that buzzes about you, and you put it away, but it returns again, and still flutters and teases. The impudence of a Scotchman is the impudence of a leech, that fixes and sucks your blood."—MURPHY.

¹ This was, no doubt, the book styled "Remarks on Dr. Samuel Johnson's Journey to the Hebrides, &c., by the Rev. Donald M'Nicol." It had, by way of motto, a citation from Ray's Proverbs: "*Old men and travellers lie by authority.*" It was not printed till 1779. The second Scotchman, whom Mr. Boswell supposes to have helped in this work, Sir James Mackintosh very reasonably surmises to have been Macpherson.—C.

² Maclean of Torloisk was grandfather to the present Marchioness of Northampton.—WALTER SCOTT.

nealth in a bumper. The toast was not proposed by me, which is a circumstance to be remarked, for I am now so connected with you, that anything that I can say or do, to your honour has not the value of an additional compliment. It is only giving you a guinea out of that treasure of admiration which already belongs to you, and which is no hidden treasure; for I suppose my admiration of you is co-existent with the knowledge of my character.

"I find that the Highlanders and Hebrideans in general are much fonder of your 'Journey,' than the low-country or *hither* Scots. One of the Grants said to-day, that he was sure you were a man of a good heart, and a candid man, and seemed to hope he should be able to convince you of the antiquity of a good proportion of the poems of Ossian. After all that has passed, I think the matter is capable of being proved to a certain degree. I am told that Macpherson got one old Erse MS. from Clanranald, for the restitution of which he executed a formal obligation; and it is affirmed, that the Gaelic (call it Erse or call it Irish) has been written in the Highlands and Hebrides for many centuries. It is reasonable to suppose, that such of the inhabitants as acquired any learning possessed the art of writing as well as their Irish neighbours and Celtic cousins; and the question is, can sufficient evidence be shown of this?

"Those who are skilled in ancient writings can determine the age of MSS., or at least can ascertain the century in which they were written; and if men of veracity, who are so skilled, shall tell us that MSS. in the possession of families in the Highlands and isles are the works of a remote age, I think we should be convinced by their testimony.

"There is now come to this city, Ranald Macdonald from the Isle of Egg, who has several MSS. of Erse poetry, which he wishes to publish by subscription. I have engaged to take three copies of the book, the price of which is to be six shillings, as I would subscribe for all the Erse that can be printed, be it old or new, that the language may be preserved. This man says, that some of his manuscripts are ancient; and, to be sure, one of them which was shown to me does appear to have the duskiness of antiquity. . . . The inquiry is not yet quite hopeless, and I should think that the exact truth may be discovered, if proper means be used. I am, &c.

"JAMES BOSWELL."

LETTER 207.

TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"Feb. 25, 1775.

"DEAR SIR,—I am sorry that I could get no books for my friends in Scotland. Mr. Strahan has at last promised to send two dozen to you. If they come, put the name of my friends into them; you may cut them out,¹ and paste them with a little starch in the book.

"You then are going wild about Ossian. Why do you think any part can be proved? The dusky manuscript of Egg is probably not fifty years old: if

¹ From a list in his handwriting

it be an hundred, it proves nothing. The tale of Clanranald is no proof. Has Clanranald told it? Can he prove it? There are, I believe, no Erse manuscripts. None of the old families had a single letter in Erse that we heard of. You say it is likely that they could write. The learned, if any learned there were, could; but knowing by that learning some written language, in that language they wrote, as letters had never been applied to their own. If there are manuscripts, let them be shown, with some proof that they are not forged for the occasion. You say many can remember parts of Ossian. I believe all those parts are versions of the English; at least there is no proof of their antiquity.

“Macpherson is said to have made some translations himself; and having taught a boy to write it, ordered him to say that he had learnt it of his grandmother. The boy, when he grew up, told the story. This Mrs. Williams heard at Mrs. Strahan’s table. Don’t be credulous; you know how little a Highlander can be trusted. Macpherson is, so far as I know, very quiet. Is not that proof enough? Everything is against him. No visible manuscript: no inscription in the language: no correspondence among friends: no transaction of business, of which a single scrap remains in the ancient families. Macpherson’s pretence is that the character was Saxon. If he had not talked unskilfully of *manuscripts*, he might have fought with oral tradition much longer. As to Mr. Grant’s information, I suppose he knows much less of the matter than ourselves.

“In the meantime, the bookseller says that the sale¹ is sufficiently quick. They printed four thousand. Correct your copy wherever it is wrong, and bring it up. Your friends will all be glad to see you. I think of going myself into the country about May. I am sorry that I have not managed to send the book sooner. I have left four for you, and do not restrict you absolutely to follow my directions in the distribution. You must use your own discretion.

“Make my compliments to Mrs. Boswell: I suppose she is now beginning to forgive me. I am, dear Sir, your humble servant,

“SAM. JOHNSON.”

LETTER 208.

TO MRS. THRALE.

“University College, Oxford, March 8, 1775.

“The fate of my proposal for our friend Mr. Carter will be decided on Monday. Those whom I have spoken to are all friends. I have not abated any part of the entrance or payment, for it has not been thought too much, and I hope he will have scholars.

“I am very deaf; and yet cannot well help being much in company, though it is often very uncomfortable. But when I have done this thing, which I hope is a good thing, or find that I cannot do it, I wish to live a while under your care and protection.”

¹ Of his “Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland.”

CHAPTER 1V.

1775.

Boswell revisits London—Peter Garrick—"Taxation no Tyranny"—Dr. Tower's "Answer"—Gerard Hamilton—Sheridan's Gold Medal to home—Mrs. Abington—Cibber's "Non-juror"—Boswell's "Surveillance"—Garrick's Prologues—The Adams—Garrick's Imitations of Johnson—Gray's Odes—Lord Chesterfield's Letters—Johnson's Diploma of LL.D.—Abyssinian Bruce—Coleman's "Odes to Obscurity and Oblivion."—Mason's "Elfrida," and "Caractacus"—The Bath-Easton Vase—Fleet Street and Charing Cross.

ON Tuesday, 21st March, I arrived in London ; and on repairing to Dr. Johnson's before dinner, found him in his study, sitting with Mr. Peter Garrick, the elder brother of David, strongly resembling him in countenance and voice, but of more sedate and placid manners. Johnson informed me, that though Mr. Beauchamp was in great pain, it was hoped he was not in danger, and that he now wished to consult Dr. Heberden, to try the effect of a "*new understanding*." Both at this interview, and in the evening at Mr. Thrale's, where he and Mr. Peter Garrick and I met again, he was vehement on the subject of the Ossian controversy ; observing, "We do not know that there are any ancient Erse manuscripts ; and we have no other reason to disbelieve that there are men with three heads, but that we do not know that there are any such men." He also was outrageous upon his supposition that my countrymen "loved Scotland better than truth," saying, "All of them,—nay not all,—but *droves* of them, would come up, and attest anything for the honour of Scotland." He also persevered in his wild allegation, that he questioned if there was a tree between Edinburgh and the English border older than himself. I assured him he was mistaken, and suggested that the proper punishment would be that he should receive a stripe at every tree above a hundred years old, that was found within that space. He laughed, and said, "I believe I might submit to it for a *baubee*."

The doubts which, in my correspondence with him, I had ven-

tured to state as to the justice and wisdom of the conduct of Great Britain towards the American colonies, while I at the same time requested that he would enable me to inform myself upon that momentous subject, he had altogether disregarded : and had recently published a pamphlet, entitled "Taxation no Tyranny ; an Answer to the Resolutions and Address of the American Congress." *¹

He had long before indulged most unfavourable sentiments of our fellow-subjects in America. For, as early as 1769, I was told by Dr. John Campbell, that he had said of them, "Sir, they are a race of convicts, and ought to be thankful for anything we allow them short of hanging."

Of this performance I avoided to talk with him ; for I had now formed a clear and settled opinion, that the people of America were well warranted to resist a claim that their fellow-subjects in the mother country should have the entire command of their fortunes, by taxing them without their own consent ; and the extreme violence which it breathed appeared to me so unsuitable to the mildness of a Christian philosopher, and so directly opposite to the principles of peace which he had so beautifully recommended in his pamphlet respecting Falkland's Islands, that I was sorry to see him appear in so unfavourable a light. Besides, I could not perceive in it that ability of argument, or that felicity of expression, for which he was, upon other occasions, so eminent. Positive assertion, sarcastical severity, and extravagant ridicule, which he himself reprobated as a test of truth, were united in this rhapsody.

That this pamphlet was written at the desire of those who were then in power, I have no doubt, and, indeed, he owned to me, that it had been revised and curtailed by some of them. He told me that they had struck out one passage, which was to this effect :

"That the colonists could with no solidity argue from their not having been taxed while in their infancy, that they should not now be taxed. We do not put a calf into the plough ; we wait till he is an ox."

He said, "They struck it out either critically as too ludicrous, or politically as too exasperating. I care not which. It was their

¹ Published March 7, 1775, by T. Cadell in the Strand.

business. If an architect says I will build five stories, and the man who employs him says I will have only three, the employer is to decide." "Yes, Sir," said I, "in ordinary cases: but should it be so when the architect gives his skill and labor *gratis*?"

Unfavourable as I am constrained to say my opinion of this pamphlet was, yet since it was congenial with the sentiments of numbers at that time, and as everything relating to the writings of Dr. Johnson is of importance in literary history, I shall therefore insert some passages which were struck out, it does not appear why, either by himself or those who revised it. They appear printed in a few proof leaves of it in my possession, marked with corrections in his own handwriting. I shall distinguish them by *italics*.

In the paragraph where he says, the Americans were incited to resistance by European intelligence from

"men whom they thought their friends, but who were friends only to themselves,"

there followed—

"and made by their selfishness, the enemies of their country."

And the next paragraph ran thus :

"On the original contrivers of mischief, *rather than on those whom they have deluded*, let an insulted nation pour out its vengeance.

The paragraph which came next was in these words :

"Unhappy is that country in which men can hope for advancement by favouring its enemies. The tranquillity of stable government is not always easily preserved against the machinations of single innovators; but what can be the hope of quiet, when factions hostile to the legislature can be openly formed and openly avowed?"

After the paragraph which now concludes the pamphlet, there follows this, in which he certainly means the great Earl of Chatham, and glances at a certain Lord Chancellor.¹

"If, by the fortune of war, they drive us utterly away, what they will do next can only be conjectured. If a new monarchy is erected, they will want a

¹ Lord Camden.—C.

king. He who first takes into his hand the sceptre of America should have a good omen. WILLIAM has been known both a conqueror and deliverer; and perhaps England, however contemned, might yet supply them with another WILLIAM. Whigs, indeed, are not willing to be governed; and it is possible that King WILLIAM may be strongly inclined to guide their measures; but Whigs have been cheated like other mortals, and suffered their leader to become their tyrant under the name of their protector. What more they will receive from England no man can tell. In their rudiments of empire they may want a chancellor."

Then came this paragraph :

"Their numbers are, at present, not quite sufficient for the greatness which, in some form of government or other, is to rival the ancient monarchies; but by Dr. Franklin's rule of progression, they will, in a century and a quarter, be more than equal to the inhabitants of Europe. When the Whigs of America are thus multiplied, let the princes of the earth tremble in their palaces. If they should continue to double and to double, their own hemisphere would not contain them. But let our boldest opponents of authority look forward with delight to this futurity of Whiggism."

How it ended I know not, as it is cut off abruptly at the foot of the last of these proof pages.

His pamphlets in support of the measures of administration were published on his own account, and he afterwards collected them into a volume, with the title of "Political Tracts, by the Author of the Rambler," with this motto :

"Fallitur egregio quisquis sub principe credit
Servitium; nunquam libertas gratior extat
Quam sub rege pio."—*Claudianus*.

These pamphlets drew upon him numerous attacks. Against the common weapons of literary warfare he was hardened; but there were two instances of animadversion which I communicated to him, and from what I could judge, both from his silence and his looks, appeared to me to impress him much.¹

One was "A Letter to Dr. Samuel Johnson, occasioned by his late political Publications." It appeared previous to his "Taxa-

¹ Mr. Boswell, by a very natural prejudice, construes Johnson's *silence and looks* into something like a concurrence in his own sentiments; but it does not appear that Johnson ever abated one jot the firmness and decision of his opinion on those questions.

tion no Tyranny," and was written by Dr. Joseph Towers.¹ In that performance, Dr. Johnson was treated with the respect due to so eminent a man, while his conduct as a political writer was boldly and pointedly arraigned, as inconsistent with the character of one, who, if he did employ his pen upon politics,

"it might reasonably be expected should distinguish himself, not by party violence and rancour, but by moderation and by wisdom."

It concluded thus :—

"I would, however, wish you to remember, should you again address the public under the character of a political writer, that luxuriance of imagination or energy of language will ill compensate for the want of candour, of justice, and of truth. And I shall only add, that should I hereafter be disposed to read, as I heretofore have done, the most excellent of all your performances, 'The Rambler,' the pleasure which I had been accustomed to find in it will be much diminished by the reflection that the writer of so moral, so elegant, and so valuable a work, was capable of prostituting his talents in such productions as 'The False Alarm,' the 'Thoughts on the Transactions respecting Falkland's Islands,' and 'The Patriot.'"

I am willing to do justice to the merit of Dr. Towers, of whom I will say, that although I abhor² his Whiggish democratical notions and propensities (for I will not call them principles), I esteem as an ingenious, knowing, and very convivial man.

The other instance was a paragraph of a letter to me, from my old and most intimate friend the Rev. Mr. Temple, who wrote the character of Gray, which has had the honour to be adopted both by Mr. Mason and Dr. Johnson in their accounts of that poet. The words were,

"How can your great, I will not say your *pious*, but your *moral* friend, support the barbarous measures of administration, which they have not the face to ask even their infidel pensioner Hume to defend?"

¹ Dr. Joseph Towers, a miscellaneous writer, and a preacher among the Unitarians, was born in 1737, and died 1799.

² Mr. Boswell is here very inconsistent; for, *abhorring* Dr. Tower's *Whiggish democratical* notions and *propensities*, how can he allow any weight to his opinions in a case which called these propensities into full effect; and above all, how could he suppose that Dr. Johnson, with his known feelings and opinions, could be influenced by a person professing such doctrines?—C.

However confident of the rectitude of his own mind, Johnson may have felt sincere uneasiness that his conduct should be erroneously imputed to unworthy motives by good men; and that the influence of his valuable writings should on that account be in any degree obstructed or lessened.

He complained to a right honourable friend¹ of distinguished talents and very elegant manners, with whom he maintained a long intimacy, and whose generosity towards him will afterwards appear, that his pension having been given to him as a literary character, he had been applied to by the administration to write political pamphlets; and he was even so much irritated, that he declared his resolution to resign his pension. His friend showed him the impropriety of such a measure, and he afterwards expressed his gratitude, and said he had received good advice. To that friend he once signified a wish to have his pension secured to him for his life; but he neither asked nor received from government any reward whatsoever for his political labours.

On Friday, March 24, I met him at the LITERARY CLUB, where Mr. Beauclerk, Mr. Langton, Mr. Colman, Dr. Percy, Mr. Vesey, Sir Charles Bunbury, Dr. George Fordyce, Mr. Steevens, and Mr. Charles Fox. Before he came in, we talked of his "Journey to the Western Islands," and of his coming away, "willing to believe the second sight,"² which seemed to excite some ridicule. I was then so impressed with the truth of many of the stories of which I had been told, that I avowed my conviction, saying, "He is only *willing* to believe: I *do* believe. The evidence is enough for me, though not for his great mind. What will not fill a quart bottle will fill a pint bottle. I am filled with belief." "Are you?" said Colman: "then cork it up."

¹ Mr. Gerard Hamilton. This anecdote is wholly at variance with Mr. Boswell's own assertion, *ante*, Vol. I. p. 300; and—without going the whole length of that assertion, "that Johnson's pension had *no influence whatsoever* on his political publications"—Mr. Hamilton's anecdote may be doubted, not only from a consideration of Johnson's own character and principles, but from the evidence of all his other friends—persons who knew him more intimately than Mr. Hamilton—Mrs. Thrale, Mr. Murphy, Sir J. Hawkins, Mr. Tyers—who all declare that his political pamphlets expressed the opinions which in private conversation he always maintained. Mr. Boswell, we have seen, was of the same opinion as to Johnson's sincerity, till he took up the adverse side of the political question. Then, indeed, he admits, *not only* without contradiction, but with a species of confirmation, Mr. Hamilton's anecdote.—C.

² Johnson's "Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland."—Works, vol. viii. p. 347.

I found his "Journey" the common topic of conversation in London at this time, wherever I happened to be. At one of Lord Mansfield's formal Sunday evening conversations, strangely called *Levéés*, his lordship addressed me, "We have all been reading your travels, Mr. Boswell." I answered, "I was but the humble attendant of Dr. Johnson." The Chief-Justice replied, with that air and manner which none, who ever saw and heard him, can forget, "He speaks ill of nobody but Ossian."

Johnson was in high spirits this evening at the club, and talked with great animation and success. He attacked Swift, as he used to do upon all occasions. "The 'Tale of a Tub' is so much superior to his other writings, that one can hardly believe he was the author of it:¹ there is in it such a vigour of mind, such a swarm of thoughts, so much of nature, and art, and life." I wondered to hear him say of "Gulliver's Travels," "When once you have thought of big men and little men, it is very easy to do all the rest." I endeavoured to make a stand for Swift, and tried to rouse those who were much more able to defend him; but in vain. Johnson at last, of his own accord, allowed very great merit to the inventory of articles found in the pocket of "the Man Mountain," particularly the description of his watch, which it was conjectured was his God, as he consulted it upon all occasions. He observed, that Swift put his name to but two things (after he had a name to put), "The Plan for the Improvement of the English Language," and the last "Drapier's Letter."

From Swift, there was an easy transition to Mr. Thomas Sheri-

¹ This doubt has been much agitated on both sides, I think without good reason. See Addison's "Freeholder," May 4th, 1714; "An Apology for the Tale of a Tub;" Dr. Hawkesworth's "Preface to Swift's Works," and Swift's "Letter to Tooke the Printer," and Tooke's "Answer" in that collection; Sheridan's "Life of Swift;" Mr. Courtenay's note on p. 8, of his "Political Review of the Literary and Moral Character of Dr. Johnson;" and Mr. Cooksey's "Essay on the Life and Character of John, Lord Somers, Baron of Evesham." Dr. Johnson here speaks only to the *internal evidence*. I take leave to differ with him, having a very high estimation of the powers of Dr. Swift. His "Sentiments of a Church-of-Englandman;" his "Sermons on the Trinity," and other serious pieces, prove his learning as well as his acuteness in logic and metaphysics; and his various compositions of a different cast exhibit not only wit, humour, and ridicule, but a knowledge "of nature, and art, and life;" a combination, therefore, of those powers, when (as the "Apology" says) "the author was young, his invention at the height, and his reading fresh in his head," might surely produce "The Tale of a Tub."—B.

dan JOHNSON. "Sheridan is a wonderful admirer of the tragedy of Douglas, and presented its author with a gold medal. Some years ago, at a coffee-house in Oxford, I called to him, 'Mr. Sheridan, Mr. Sheridan, how came you to give a gold medal to Home, for writing that foolish play?' This, you see, was wanton and insolent; but I *meant* to be wanton and insolent. A medal has no value but as a stamp of merit. And was Sheridan to assume to himself the right of giving that stamp? If Sheridan was magnificent enough to bestow a gold medal as an honorary reward of dramatic excellence, he should have requested one of the Universities to choose the person on whom it should be conferred. Sheridan had no right to give a stamp of merit: it was counterfeiting Apollo's coin."¹

On Monday, March 27, I breakfasted with him at Mr. Strahan's. He told us, that he was engaged to go that evening to Mrs. Abington's benefit. "She was visiting some ladies whom I was visiting, and begged that I would come to her benefit. I told her I could not hear: but she insisted so much on my coming, that it would have been brutal to have refused her." This was a speech quite characteristical. He loved to bring forward his having been in the gay circles of life; and he was, perhaps, a little vain of the solicitations of this elegant and fashionable actress. He told us, the play was to be "The Hypocrite," altered from Cibber's "Nonjuror," so as to satirise the Methodists. "I do not think" said he, "the character of the Hypocrite justly applicable to the Methodists, but it is very applicable to the Nonjurors. I once said to Dr. Madan, a clergyman of Ireland, who was a great Whig, that perhaps a Nonjuror would have been less criminal in taking the oaths imposed by the ruling power, than refusing them; because refusing them necessari-

¹ The medal was presented in 1757, and as it does not appear that Johnson and Sheridan ever met after the affair of the pension (*ante*, 1762), this fact occurred probably in Johnson's visit to Oxford in 1759. It seems, therefore, that Johnson had begun to be "*wanton and insolent*" towards Sheridan before the pension had caused the cup of gall to overflow. Mr. Whyte, the friend of Sheridan, gives the history of the *medal* thus: "When Sheridan undertook to play *Douglas* in Dublin, he had liberally written to Home, promising him the profits of the third night. It happened, however, that these profits fell very short, and Sheridan was rather perplexed what to do. At first, he thought of offering the author a piece of plate, but, on the suggestion of Mr. Whyte, the idea of a medal was adopted." When Johnson called *Douglas* "a foolish play," he was not only "*wanton and insolent*," as he admits, but showed very bad taste, and very violent prejudice.—C.

laid him under almost an irresistible temptation to be more criminal; for a man *must* live, and if he precludes himself from the support furnished by the establishment will probably be reduced to very wicked shifts to maintain himself.”¹ BOSWELL. “I should think, Sir, that a man who took the oaths contrary to his principles was a determined wicked man, because he was sure he was committing perjury: whereas a Nonjuror might be insensibly led to do what was wrong, without being so directly conscious of it.” JOHNSON. “Why, Sir, a man who goes to bed to his patron’s wife is pretty sure that he is committing wickedness.” BOSWELL. “Did the nonjuring clergyman do so, Sir?” JOHNSON. “I am afraid many of them did.”²

I was startled at this argument, and could by no means think it convincing. Had not his own father complied with the requisition of government,³ (as to which he once observed to me, when I pressed him upon it, “*That*, Sir, he was to settle with himself,”) he

¹ This was not merely a cursory remark; for, in his *Life of Fenton*, he observes, “With many other wise and virtuous men, who, at that time of discord and debate (about the beginning of this century), consulted conscience, well or ill formed, more than interest, he doubted the legality of the government; and refusing to qualify himself for public employment, by taking the oaths required, left the University without a degree.” This conduct Johnson calls “perverseness of integrity.” The question concerning the morality of taking oaths, of whatever kind, imposed by the prevailing power at the time, rather than to be excluded from all consequence, or even any considerable usefulness in society, has been agitated with all the acuteness of casuistry. It is related, that he who devised the oath of abjuration profligately boasted, that he had framed a test which should “damn one half of the nation, and starve the other.” Upon minds not exalted to inflexible rectitude, or minds in which zeal for a party is predominant to excess, taking that oath against conviction may have been palliated under the plea of necessity, or ventured upon in heat, as upon the whole producing more good than evil. At a county election in Scotland, many years ago, when there was a warm contest between the friends of the Hanoverian succession, and those against it, the oath of abjuration having been demanded, the freeholders upon one side rose to go away. Upon which a very sanguine gentleman, one of their number, ran to the door to stop them, calling out with much earnestness, ‘Stay, stay, my friends, and let us swear the rogues out of it!’”

² What evidence is there of this being the prevailing sin of the nonjuring clergy beyond Cibber’s comedy, which, slight evidence as a comedy would be in any such case, is next to none at all on this occasion, for Cibber’s play was a mere adaptation of Molière’s *Taruffe*?—C.

³ Extract from the book containing the proceedings of the corporation of Lichfield: “19th July, 1712, Agreed that Mr. Michael Johnson be, and he is hereby elected a magistrate and brother of their incorporation; a day is given him to Thursday next to take the oath of fidelity and allegiance, and the oath of a magistrate. Signed, &c.”—“25th July, 1712. Mr. Johnson took the oath of allegiance, and that he believed there was no transubstantiation in the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, before, &c.”—HANWOOD.

would probably have thought more unfavourably of a Jacobite who took the oaths :

" ——— had he not resembled
My father as he swore——,"

Mr. Strahan talked of launching into the great ocean of London, in order to have a chance for rising into eminence ; and observing that many men were kept back from trying their fortunes there, because they were born to a competency, said, " Small certainties are the bane of men of talents ;" which Johnson confirmed. Mr. Strahan put Johnson in mind of a remark which he had made to him : " There are few ways in which a man can be more innocently employed than in getting money." " The more one thinks of this," said Strahan, " the juster it will appear."

Mr. Strahan had taken a poor boy from the country as an apprentice, upon Johnson's recommendation. Johnson having inquired after him, said, " Mr. Strahan, let me have five guineas on account, and I'll give this boy one. Nay, if a man recommends a boy, and does nothing for him, it is sad work. Call him down."

I followed him into the court-yard,¹ behind Mr. Strahan's house ; and there I had a proof of what I had heard him profess, that he talked alike to all. " Some people tell you that they let themselves down to the capacity of their hearers. I never do that I speak uniformly, in as intelligible a manner as I can."

" Well, my boy, how do you go on ?" " Pretty well, Sir ; but they are afraid I ar'n't strong enough for some parts of the business." JOHNSON. " Why, I shall be sorry for it ; for when you consider with how little mental power and corporeal labour a printer can get a guinea a week, it is a very desirable occupation for you. Do you hear—take all the pains you can ; and if this does not do, we must think of some other way of life for you. There's a guinea."

Here was one of the many, many instances of his active benevo-

¹ This was "*surveillance*," as the French call it, with a vengeance ! and this fact, which Mr. Boswell owns with such amusing simplicity, may be taken as a specimen of the "*espionage*" which he exercised over Johnson. The reader will have observed, that two French phrases are here used, because, though Mr. Boswell's affectionate curiosity led *him* into such courses, English manners have no such practice, nor the English language a term to describe it.—C.

tence. At the same time, the slow and sonorous solemnity with which, while he bent himself down, he addressed a little thick short-legged boy, contrasted with the boy's awkwardness and awe, could not but excite some ludicrous emotions.

I met him at Drury Lane playhouse in the evening. Sir Joshua Reynolds, at Mrs. Abington's request, had promised to bring a body of wits to her benefit ; and having secured forty places in the front boxes, had done me the honour to put me in the group. Johnson sat on the seat directly behind me ; and as he could neither see nor hear at such a distance from the stage, he was wrapped up in grave abstraction, and seemed quite a cloud, amidst all the sunshine of glitter and gaiety. I wondered at his patience in sitting out a play of five acts, and a farce of two. He said very little ; but after the prologue to "Bon Ton" had been spoken, which he could hear pretty well from the more slow and distinct utterance, he talked on prologue-writing, and observed, "Dryden has written prologues superior to any that David Garrick has written ; but David Garrick has written more good prologues than Dryden has done. It is wonderful that he has been able to write such a variety of them."

At Mr. Beauclerk's, where I supped, was Mr. Garrick, whom I made happy with Johnson's praise of his prologues ; and I suppose in gratitude to him, he took up one of his favourite topics, the nationality of the Scotch, which he maintained in a pleasant manner, with the aid of a little poetical fiction. "Come, come, don't deny it : they are really national. Why, now, the Adams are as liberal-minded men as any in the world : but, I don't know how it is, all their workmen are Scotch. You are, to be sure, wonderfully free from that nationality ; but so it happens, that you employ the only Scotch shoebblack in London." He imitated the manner of his old master with ludicrous exaggeration ; repeating, with pauses and half-whistlings interjected,

"Os homini sublime dedit,—cælumque tueri
Jussit,—et erectos ad sidera—tollere vultus,"

looking downwards all the time,¹ and, while pronouncing the four

¹ This exhibition of Johnson's downward look and gesticulations while reciting *os sublime et tollere vultus*, resembles one which Lord Byron describes : "Mr. Grattan's manners is

last words, absolutely touching the ground with a kind of contorted gesticulation.¹

Garrick, however, when he pleased, could imitate Johnson very exactly ; for that great actor, with his distinguished powers of expression which were so universally admired, possessed also an admirable talent of mimicry. He was always jealous² that Johnson spoke lightly of him. I recollect his exhibiting him to me one day, as if saying, "Davy has some convivial pleasantry about him, but 'tis a futile fellow ;" which he uttered perfectly with the tone and air of Johnson.

I cannot too frequently request of my readers, while they peruse my account of Johnson's conversation, to endeavour to keep in mind his deliberate and strong utterance. His mode of speaking was indeed very impressive ;³ and I wish it could be preserved as music is written, according to the very ingenious method of Mr. Steele,⁴ who

private life were odd, but natural. Curran used to take him off, bowing to the very ground, and 'thanking God that he had no peculiarity of gesture or appearance,' in a way irresistibly ludicrous."—Moore's Life of Byron, vol i p. 405.—C.

¹ Mr. Whyte has related an anecdote of Johnson's violence of gesticulation, which, but for this evidence of Garrick's, one could have hardly believed. "The house on the right at the bottom of Beaufort Buildings was occupied by Mr. Chamberlain, Mrs. Sheridan's eldest brother (an eminent surgeon), by whom Johnson was often invited in the snug way with the family party. At one of those social meetings Johnson as usual sat next the lady of the house ; the dessert still continuing, and the ladies in no haste to withdraw, Mrs. Chamberlain had moved a little back from the table, and was carelessly dangling her foot backwards and forwards as she sat, enjoying 'the feast of reason and the flow of soul.' Johnson, the while, in a moment of abstraction, was convulsively working his hand up and down, which the lady observing, she roguishly edged her foot within his reach, and, as might partly have been expected, Johnson clenched hold of it, and drew off her shoe ; she started, and hastily exclaimed, 'O, fie, Mr. Johnson !' The company at first knew not what to make of it : but one of them, perceiving the joke, tittered. Johnson, not improbably aware of the trick, apologised. "Nay, madam, recollect yourself ; I know not that I have justly incurred your rebuke ; the emotion was involuntary, and the action not intentionally rude."—Whyte's Miscel. Nova, p. 50.—C.

² On the contrary, the anecdote which follows rather proves that Garrick had learned to repress Johnson's contemptuous expressions with an easy gaiety.—C.

³ My noble friend Lord Pembroke said once to me at Wilton, with a happy pleasantry and some truth, "that Dr. Johnson's sayings would not appear so extraordinary, were it not for his *bow-wow way*." The sayings themselves are generally of sterling merit ; but, doubtless, his *manner* was an addition to their effect ; and therefore should be attended to as much as may be. It is necessary however to guard those who were not acquainted with him against overcharged imitations or caricatures of his manner, which are frequently attempted, and many of which are second-hand copies from the late Mr. Henderson, the actor, who, though a good mimic of some persons, did not represent Johnson correctly.

⁴ See "Prosodia Rationalis ; or, an Essay towards establishing the Melody and Measure of Music, to be expressed and perpetuated by peculiar Symbols. London, 1779."

has shown how the recitation of Mr. Garrick and other eminent speakers, might be transmitted to posterity *in score*.¹

Next day I dined with Johnson at Mr. Thrale's. He attacked Gray, calling him "a dull fellow." BOSWELL. "I understand he was reserved, and might appear dull in company; but surely he was not dull in poetry." JOHNSON. "Sir, he was dull in company, dull in his closet, dull everywhere. He was dull in a new way, and that made many people think him GREAT. He was a mechanical poet. He then repeated some ludicrous lines which have escaped my memory, and said, "Is not that GREAT, like his Odes?" Mrs. Thrale maintained that his Odes were melodious; upon which he exclaimed,

"Weave the warp, and weave the woof;"

I added, in a solemn tone,

"The winding-sheet of Edward's race"

There is a good line.—"Ay," said he, "and the next line is a good one (pronouncing it contemptuously),

'Give ample verge and room enough.'—

No, Sir, there are but two good stanzas in Gray's poetry, which are in his 'Elegy in a Country Churchyard.' He then repeated the stanza,

"For who to dumb forgetfulness a prey," &c.

mistaking one word; for instead of *precincts* he said *confines*. He added, "The other stanza I forget."

A young lady who had married a man much her inferior in rank being mentioned, a question arose how a woman's relations should behave to her in such a situation; and while I recapitulate the debate, and recollect what has since happened, I cannot but be struck

¹ I use the phrase *in score*, as Dr. Johnson has explained it in his Dictionary. "*A song in SCORE*, the words with the musical notes of a song annexed." But I understand that in scientific propriety it means all the parts of a musical composition noted down in the characters by which it is exhibited to the eye of the skilful.—B. It was *declamation* that Steele pretended to reduce to notation by new characters. This he called the *melody* of speech, not the *harmony*, which the term *in score* implies.—BURNET

in a manner that delicacy¹ forbids me to express. While I contended that she ought to be treated with an inflexible steadiness of displeasure, Mrs. Thrale was all for mildness and forgiveness, and, according to the vulgar phrase, "making the best of a bad bargain." JOHNSON. "Madam, we must distinguish. Were I a man of rank, I would not let a daughter starve who had made a mean marriage; but having voluntarily degraded herself from the station which she was originally entitled to hold, I would support her only in that which she herself had chosen; and would not put her on a level with my other daughters. You are to consider, Madam, that it is our duty to maintain the subordination of civilized society; and when there is a gross and shameful deviation from rank, it should be punished so as to deter others from the same perversion."

After frequently considering this subject, I am more and more confirmed in what I then meant to express, and which was sanctioned by the authority, and illustrated by the wisdom of Johnson; and I think it of the utmost consequence to the happiness of society, to which subordination is absolutely necessary. It is weak and contemptible, and unworthy, in a parent to relax in such a case. It is sacrificing general advantage to private feelings. And let it be considered that the claim of a daughter who has acted thus, to be restored to her former situation, is either fantastical or unjust. If there be no value in the distinction of rank, what does she suffer by being kept in the situation to which she has descended? If there be a value in that distinction, it ought to be steadily maintained. If indulgence be shown to such conduct, and the offenders know that in a longer or shorter time they shall be received as well as if they had not contaminated their blood by a base alliance, the great check upon that inordinate caprice which generally occasions low marriages will be removed, and the fair and comfortable order of improved life will be miserably disturbed.

Lord Chesterfield's Letters being mentioned, Johnson said, "It

¹ Mr. Boswell's *delicacy* to Mrs. Piozzi is quite exemplary! but after all, there is nothing which he has insinuated or said too bad for such a lamentable and degrading weakness as she was guilty of in her marriage with Mr. Piozzi.—C.

was not to be wondered at that they had so great a sale, considering that they were the letters of a statesman, a wit, one who had been so much in the mouths of mankind, one long accustomed *virûm volitare per ora*."

On Friday, 31st March, I supped with him and some friends at a tavern. One of the company attempted, with too much forwardness, to rally him on his late appearance at a theatre ; but had reason to repent of his temerity. "Why, Sir, did you go to Mrs. Abington's benefit? Did you see?" JOHNSON. "No, Sir." "Did you hear?" JOHNSON. "No, Sir." "Why then, Sir, did you go?" JOHNSON. "Because, Sir, she is a favourite of the public ; and when the public cares the thousandth part for you that it does for her, I will go to your benefit too."

Next morning I won a small bet from Lady Diana Beauclerk, by asking him as to one of his particularities, which her Ladyship laid I durst not do. It seems he had been frequently observed at the club to put into his pocket the Seville oranges, after he had squeezed the juice of them into the drink which he made for himself. Beauclerk and Garrick talked of it to me, and seemed to think that he had a strange unwillingness to be discovered. We could not divine what he did with them ; and this was the bold question to be put. I saw on his table the spoils of the preceding night, some fresh peels nicely scraped and cut into pieces. "O, Sir," said I, "I now partly see what you do with the squeezed oranges which you put into your pocket at the club." JOHNSON. "I have a great love for them." BOSWELL. "And pray, Sir, what do you do with them? You scrape them it seems, very neatly, and what next?" JOHNSON. "Let them dry, Sir." BOSWELL. "And what next?" JOHNSON. "Nay, Sir, you shall know their fate no further." BOSWELL. "Then the world must be left in the dark. It must be said (assuming a mock solemnity) he scraped them and let them dry, but what he did with them next he never could be prevailed upon to tell." JOHNSON. "Nay, Sir, you should say it more emphatically :—he could not be prevailed upon, even by his dearest friends, to tell."

He had this morning received his diploma as Doctor of Laws from the University of Oxford. He did not vaunt of his new dig-

nity, but I understood he was highly pleased with it. I shall here insert the progress and completion of that high academical honour, in the same manner as I have traced his obtaining that of Master of Arts.

"TO THE REV. DR. FOTHERGILL,

Vice-Chancellor of the University of Oxford, to be communicated to the heads of houses and proposed in convocation.

"Downing Street, March 3, 1775.

"MR. VICE-CHANCELLOR AND GENTLEMEN,—The honour of the degree of M.A. by diploma, formerly conferred upon Mr. Samuel Johnson, in consequence of his having eminently distinguished himself by the publication of a series of essays, excellently calculated to form the manners of the people, and in which the cause of religion and morality has been maintained and recommended by the strongest powers of argument and elegance of language, reflected an equal degree of lustre upon the University itself.

"The many learned labours which have since that time employed the attention and displayed the abilities of that great man, so much to the advancement of literature and the benefit of the community, render him worthy of more distinguished honours in the republic of letters; and I persuade myself that I shall act agreeably to the sentiments of the whole University, in desiring that it may be proposed in convocation to confer on him the degree of Doctor in Civil Law by diploma, to which I readily give my consent; and am, Mr. Vice-Chancellor and Gentlemen, your affectionate friend and servant,

"NORTH."¹

"DIPLOMA.

"Cancellarius, magistri, et scholares Universitatis Oxoniensis omnibus ad quos presentes literæ pervenerint, salutem in Domino sempiternam.

"Sciatis, virum illustrem, Samuelem Johnson, in omni humaniorum literarum genere eruditum, omniumque scientiarum comprehensione felicissimum, scriptis suis, ad popularium mores formandos summâ verborum elegantîâ ac sententiarum gravitate compositis, ita olim inclaruisse, ut dignus videretur cui ab academiâ suâ eximiam quædam laudis præmia deferrentur, quique venerabilem Magistrorum ordinem summâ cum dignitate cooptaretur:

"Cum verò eundem clarissimum virum tot postea tantique labores, in patriâ præsertim linguâ ornandâ et stabiliendâ feliciter impensi, ita insigniverint, ut in literarum republicâ princeps jam et primarius jure habeatur; nos, cancellarius, magistri, et scholares Universitatis Oxoniensis, quò talis viri merita pari honoris remuneratione exæquentur, et perpetuum suæ simul laudis, nostræque ergâ literas propensissimæ voluntatis extet monumentum, in solenni convoca-

¹ Extracted from the Convocation Register, Oxford.

tione doctorum et magistrorum regentium, et nos regentium, prædictum Samuelem Johnson doctorum in jure civili renunciavimus et constituimus, eumque, virtute præsentis diplomatis, singulis juribus, privilegiis et honoribus, ad istum gradum quæquæ pertinentibus, frui et gaudere jussimus. In cujus rei testimonium commune Universitatis Oxoniensis sigillum præsentibus apponi fecimus.

"Datum in domo nostræ convocationis die tricesimo mensis Martii, anno Domini millesimo septingentesimo, septuagesimo quinto."¹

"*Viro Reverendo THOMÆ FOTHERGILL, S. T. P. Universitatis Oxoniensis Vice-Cancellario.*

"*S. P. D.*

SAM. JOHNSON.

"Multis non est opus, ut testimonium quo, te præside, Oxonienses nomen meum posteris commendârunt, quali animo acceperim compertum faciam. Nemo sibi placens not lætatur; nemo sibi non placet, qui vobis, literarum arbitris, placere potuit. Hoc tamen habet incommodi tantum beneficium, quod mihi nunquam posthâc sine vestræ famæ detrimento vel labi liceat vel cessare; semperque sit timendum ne quod mihi tam eximie laudi est vobis aliquando fiat opprobrio. Vale, 7, Id. Apr. 1775.

LETTER 209.

TO MRS. THRALE.

"April 1, 1775.

"I HAD mistaken the day on which I was to dine with Mr. Bruce, and hear of Abyssinia, and therefore am to dine this day with Mr. Hamilton.

"The news from Oxford is that no tennis-court can be hired at any price; and that the Vice-Chancellor will not write to the Clarendon trustees without some previous intimation that his request will not be unacceptable. We must, therefore, find some way of applying to Lord Mansfield, who, with the Archbishop of York and the Bishop of Chester, holds the trust. Thus are we thrown to a vexatious distance. Poor [Carter]! do not tell him.

"The other Oxford news is that they have sent me a degree of Doctor of Laws, with such praises in the diploma as, perhaps, ought to make me

¹ The original is in my possession. He showed me the diploma, and allowed me to read it, but would not consent to my taking a copy of it, fearing perhaps that I should blaze it abroad in his lifetime. His objection to this appears from the letter to Mrs. Thrale, in which he scolds her for the grossness of her flattery of him. It is remarkable that he never, so far as I know, assumed his title of *Doctor*, but called himself *Mr.* Johnson, as appears from many of his cards or notes to myself, and I have seen many from him to other persons, in which he uniformly takes that designation. I once observed on his table a letter directed to him with the addition of *Esquire*, and objected to it as being a designation inferior to that of doctor; but he checked me, and seemed pleased with it, because, as I conjectured, he liked to be sometimes taken out of the class of literary men, and to be merely *gentil—un gentilhomme comme un autre*.

ashamed; they are very like your praises. I wonder whether I shall ever show them to you.

“Beswell will be with you. Please to ask Murphy the way to Lord Mansfield. Dr. Wetherell,¹ who is now here, and will be here for some days, is very desirous of seeing the brewhouse; I hope Mr. Thrale will send him an invitation. He does what he can for Carter.

“To-day I dine with Hamilton; to-morrow with Hoole; on Monday with Paradise; on Tuesday with master and mistress; on Wednesday with Filly; but come back to the *tower*.”

He revised some sheets of Lord Hailes’s “Annals of Scotland,” and wrote a few notes on the margin with red ink, which he bade me tell his lordship did not sink into the paper, and might be wiped off with a wet sponge, so that it did not spoil his manuscript. I observed to him that there were very few of his friends so accurate as that I could venture to put down in writing what they told me as his sayings. JOHNSON. “Why should you write down *my* sayings?” BOSWELL. “I write them when they are good.” JOHNSON. “Nay, you may as well write down the sayings of any one else that are good.” But *where*, I might with great propriety have added, can I find such?

I visited him by appointment in the evening, and we drank tea with Mrs. Williams. He told me that he had been in the company of a gentleman² whose extraordinary travels had been much the subject of conversation. But I found he had not listened to him with that full confidence, without which there is little satisfaction in the society of travellers. I was curious to hear what opinion so able a judge as Johnson had formed of his abilities, and I asked if he was not a man of sense. JOHNSON. “Why, Sir, he is not a distinct relater; and I should say, he is neither abounding nor deficient in sense. I did not perceive any superiority of understanding.” BOSWELL. “But will you not allow him a nobleness of resolution, in

¹ Dr. Nathan Wetherell, Master of University College, and father of the present Sir Charles Wetherell.

² The *tower* was a separate room at Streatham, where Dr. Johnson slept.—PROZzi. So called probably because it was *bowed*. I slept in that room many years after, and was pleased to find that Dr. Johnson’s writing-table was carefully preserved, and that even the blots of his ink were not cleaned away.—C.

³ Bruce, the Abyssinian traveller, with whom he had dined this day at Mr. Gerard Hamilton’s.—C.

penetrating into distant regions?" JOHNSON. "That, Sir, is not to the present purpose: we were talking of sense. A fighting cock has a nobleness of resolution."

Next day, Sunday, 2d April, I dined with him at Mr. Hoole's. We talked of Pope. JOHNSON. "He wrote his 'Dunciad' for fame. That was his primary motive. Had it not been for that, the dunces might have railed against him till they were weary without his troubling himself about them. He delighted to vex them, no doubt; but he had more delight in seeing how well he could vex them."

The "Odes to obscurity and Oblivion," in ridicule of "cool Mason and warm Gray," being mentioned, Johnson said, "They are Colman's best things." Upon its being observed that it was believed these Odes were made by Colman and Lloyd jointly;—JOHNSON. "Nay, Sir, how can two people make an ode? Perhaps one made one of them, and one the other." I observed that two people had made a play, and quoted the anecdote of Beaumont and Fletcher, who were brought under suspicion of treason, because while concerting the plan of a tragedy when sitting together at a tavern, one of them was overheard saying to the other, "I'll kill the king." JOHNSON. "The first of these Odes is the best; but they are both good. They exposed a very bad kind of writing."¹ BOSWELL. "Surely, Sir, Mr. Mason's 'Elfrida' is a fine poem: at least you will allow there are some good passages in it." JOHNSON. "There are now and then some good imitations of Milton's bad manner."²

I often wondered at his low estimation of the writings of Gray and Mason. Of Gray's poetry I have, in a former part of this work, expressed my high opinion; and for that of Mr. Mason I have ever entertained a warm admiration. His "Elfrida" is

¹ Gray's Odes are still on every table and in every mouth, and there are not, I believe, a dozen libraries in England which could produce these "*best things*," written by two professed wits in ridicule of them.—C.

² I have heard him relate how he used to sit in some coffee-house, and turn Mason's "Caraciacus" into ridicule for the diversion of himself and of chance comers-in. "The Elfrida," says he, "was too exquisitely pretty; I could make no fun out of that. When upon some occasions he would express his astonishment that he should have an enemy in the world, while he had been doing nothing but good to his neighbours, I used to make him recollect these circumstances:—"Why, child," said he, "what harm could that do the fellow? I always thought very well of Mason for a Cambridge man; he is, I believe, a mighty blameless character."—PROZEL.

exquisite, both in poetical description and moral sentiment ; and his "Caractacus" is a noble drama. Nor can I omit paying my tribute of praise to some of his smaller poems, which I have read with pleasure, and which no criticism shall persuade me not to like. If I wondered at Johnson's not tasting the works of Mason and Gray, still more have I wondered at their not tasting of his works : that they should be insensible to his energy of diction, to his splendour of images, and comprehension of thought. Tastes may differ as to the violin, the flute, the hautboy ; in short all the lesser instruments : but who can be insensible to the powerful impressions of the majestic organ ?

His "Taxation no Tyranny" being mentioned, he said, "I think I have not been attacked enough for it. Attack is the re-action ; I never think I have hit hard, unless it rebounds." BOSWELL. "I don't know, Sir, what you would be at. Five or six shots of small arms in every newspaper, and repeated cannonading in pamphlets, might, I think, satisfy you. But, Sir, you'll never make out this match, of which we have talked, with a certain political lady, since you are so severe against her principles." JOHNSON. "Nay, Sir, I have the better chance for that. She is like the Amazons of old ; she must be courted by the sword. But I have not been severe upon her." BOSWELL. "Yes, Sir, you have made her ridiculous." JOHNSON. "That was already done, Sir. To endeavour to make *her* ridiculous, is like blacking the chimney."

I put him in mind that the landlord at Ellon in Scotland said, that he heard he was the greatest man in England, next to Lord Mansfield. "Aye, Sir," said he, "the exception defined the idea. A Scotchman could go no farther :

'The force of Nature could no farther go.'"

Lady Miller's collection of verses by fashionable people, which were put into her Vase at Bath-easton villa,¹ near Bath, in competi-

¹ The following extract, from one of Horace Walpole's letters, will explain the proceedings of this farce :—"You must know, that near Bath is erected a new Parnassus, composed of three laurels, a myrtle tree, a weeping willow, and a view of the Avon, which has been now christened Helicon. They hold a Parnassus-fair every Thursday, give out rhymes and themes, and all the flux of quality at Bath contend for the prizes. A Roman vase, dressed with pink ribands and myrtles, receives the poetry, which is drawn out every festival ; six

tion for honorary prizes, being mentioned, he held them very cheap : "*Bouts-rimés*," said he, "is a mere conceit, and an *old* conceit *now* ; I wonder how people were persuaded to write in that manner for this lady." I named a gentleman of his acquaintance who wrote for the Vase. JOHNSON. "He was a blockhead for his pains." BOSWELL. "The Duchess of Northumberland wrote." JOHNSON. "Sir, the Duchess of Northumberland may do what she pleases : nobody will say anything to a lady of her high rank. But I should be apt to throw *****'s verses in his face."

I talked of the cheerfulness of Fleet Street, owing to the constant quick succession of people which we perceive passing through it. JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, Fleet Street has a very animated appearance ; but I think the full tide of human existence is at Charing Cross."

He made the common remark on the unhappiness which men who have led a busy life experience, when they retire in expectation of enjoying themselves at ease, and that they generally languish for want of their habitual occupation, and wish to return to it. He mentioned as strong an instance of this as can well be imagined. "An eminent tallow-chandler in London, who had acquired a considerable fortune, gave up the trade in favour of his foreman, and went to live at a country-house near town. He soon grew weary, and paid frequent visits to his old shop, where he desired they might let him know their *melting-days*, and he would come and assist them ; which he accordingly did. Here, Sir, was a man to whom the most disgusting circumstances in the business to which he had been used was a relief from idleness."

judges of these Olympic games retire and select the brightest composition, which the respective successful acknowledge, kneel to Mrs. Calliope [Miller], kiss her fair hand, and are crowned by it with myrtle, with—I don't know what. You may think this a fiction, or exaggeration. Be dumb, unbelievers ! The collection is printed, published,—yes, on my faith ! there are *bouts-rimés* on a buttered muffin, by her Grace the Duchess of Northumberland," &c.—Works, vol. v. p. 185.—C.

¹ Lady Elizabeth Seymour married, in 1740, Sir Hugh Smithson, created, in 1766, Duke of Northumberland ; from whom she was divorced in 1776.—C.

CHAPTER V.

1775

Public Speaking—Statutes against Bribery—Cibber's Comedies—Gentility and Morality—Charles II.—George I.—Trading Judges—Christopher Smart—Twiss's Travels—Addison's Italy—"Lilliburlero"—Gibbon—Patriotism—Mrs. Pritchard—Happiness—General Oglethorpe—Middle-rate Poets—Patronage—Lord Bute—Good Friday—London—Commerce—Value of Knowledge—Literary Fame—Infidelity—"Nil admirari"—Advantages of Reading.

ON Wednesday, 5th April, I dined with him at Messieurs Dillys, with Mr. John Scott of Amwell, the Quaker, Mr. Langton, Mr. Miller (now Sir John), and Dr. Thomas Campbell, an Irish clergyman, whom I took the liberty of inviting to Mr. Dilly's table, having seen him at Mr. Thrale's, and been told that he had come to England chiefly with a view to see Dr. Johnson, for whom he entertained the highest veneration. He has since published "*A Philosophical Survey of the South of Ireland*," a very entertaining book, which has, however, one fault—that it assumes the fictitious character of an Englishman.

We talked of public speaking. JOHNSON. "We must not estimate a man's powers by his being able or not able to deliver his sentiments in public. Isaac Hawkins Browne, one of the first wits of this country, got into parliament, and never opened his mouth. For my own part, I think it is more disgraceful never to try to speak, than to try it and fail; as it is more disgraceful not to fight, than to fight and be beaten." This argument appeared to me fallacious; for if a man has not spoken, it may be said that he would have done very well if he had tried; whereas, if he has tried and failed, there is nothing to be said for him. "Why, then," I asked, "is it thought disgraceful for a man not to fight, and not disgraceful not to speak in public?" JOHNSON. "Because there may be other reasons for a man's not speaking in public than want of resolution: he may have nothing to say (laughing). Whereas, Sir, you know cou

rage is reckoned the greatest of all virtues ; because, unless a man has that virtue, he has no security for preserving any other."

He observed, that "the statutes against bribery were intended to prevent upstarts with money from getting into parliament:" adding, that "if he were a gentleman of landed property, he would turn out all his tenants who did not vote for the candidate whom he supported." LANGTON. "Would not that, Sir, be checking the freedom of election?" JOHNSON. "Sir, the law does not mean that the privilege of voting should be independent of old family interest, of the permanent property of the country."

On Thursday, 6th April, I dined with him at Mr. Thomas Davies's, with Mr. Hicky, the painter, and my old acquaintance Mr. Moody, the player.

Dr. Johnson, as usual, spoke contemptuously of Colley Cibber. "It is wonderful that a man, who for forty years had lived with the great and the witty, should have acquired so ill the talents of conversation : and he had but half to furnish ; for one half of what he said was oaths." He, however, allowed considerable merit to some of his comedies, and said there was no reason to believe that the "Careless Husband" was not written by himself. Davies said, he was the first dramatic writer who introduced genteel ladies upon the stage. Johnson refuted his observation by instancing several such characters in comedies before his time. DAVIES (trying to defend himself from a charge of ignorance.) "I mean genteel moral characters." "I think," said Hicky, "gentility and morality are inseparable." BOSWELL. "By no means, Sir. The genteelest characters are often the most immoral. Does not Lord Chesterfield give precepts for uniting wickedness and the graces? A man, indeed, is not genteel when he gets drunk ; but most vices may be committed very genteelly : a man may debauch his friend's wife genteelly : he may cheat at cards genteelly." HICKY. "I do not think *that* is genteel." BOSWELL. "Sir, it may not be like a gentleman, but it may be genteel." JOHNSON. "You are meaning two different things. One means exterior grace ; the other honour. It is certain that a man may be very immoral with exterior grace. Lovelace, in 'Clarissa,' is a very genteel and a very wicked character. Tom Hervey, who died t'other day, though a vicious man, was one of the

genteel men that ever lived." Tom Davies instanced Charles the Second. JOHNSON (taking fire at an attack upon that Prince, for whom he had an extraordinary partiality.) "Charles the Second was licentious in his practice; but he always had a reverence for what was good. Charles the Second knew his people, and rewarded merit. The church was at no time better filled than in his reign. He was the best king we have had from his time till the reign of our present Majesty, except James the Second, who was a very good king,¹ but unhappily believed that it was necessary for the salvation of his subjects that they should be Roman Catholics. *He* had the merit of endeavouring to do what he thought was for the salvation of the souls of his subjects, till he lost a great empire. *We*, who thought that we should *not* be saved if we were Roman Catholics, had the merit of maintaining our religion, at the expense of submitting ourselves to the government of King William, (for it could not be done otherwise,)—to the government of one of the most worthless scoundrels that ever existed.² No, Charles the Second was not such a man as ————, (naming another king.) He did not destroy his father's will. He took money, indeed, from France: but he did not betray those over whom he ruled: he did not let the French fleet pass ours. George the First knew nothing, and desired to know nothing; did nothing, and desired to do nothing; and the only good thing that is told of him is, that he wished to restore the crown to its hereditary successor." He roared with prodigious violence against George the Second. When he ceased, Moody interjected, in an Irish tone, and with a comic look, "Ah! poor George the Second."

I mentioned that Dr. Thomas Campbell had come from Ireland to

¹ All this seems so contrary to historical truth and common sense, that no explanation can be given of it; but it excites a lively curiosity to know more of Dr. Johnson's personal history during the years 1745 and 1746, during which Boswell could find no trace of him.

² A gentleman who dined at a nobleman's table in his company and that of Mr. Thrale, to whom I was obliged for the anecdote, was willing to enter the lists in defence of King William's character, and, having opposed and contradicted Johnson two or three times petulantly enough, the master of the house began to feel uneasy, and expect disagreeable consequences: to avoid which he said, loud enough for the Doctor to hear, "Our friend here has no meaning now in all this, except just to relate at club to-morrow how he teased Johnson at dinner to-day—this is all to do himself *honour*." "No, upon my word," replied the other, "I see no *honour* in it, whatever you may do." "Well, Sir," returned Dr. Johnson sternly, "if you do not *see* the *honour*, I am sure I *feel* the *disgrace*."—PROZEL.

London, principally to see Dr. Johnson. He seemed angry at this observation. DAVIES. "Why, you know, Sir, there came a man from Spain to see Livy;¹ and Corelli came to England to see Purcell,² and when he heard he was dead, went directly back again to Italy." JOHNSON. "I should not have wished to be dead to disappoint Campbell, had he been so foolish as you represent him; but I should have wished to have been a hundred miles off." This was apparently perverse; and I do believe it was not his real way of thinking: he could not but like a man who came so far to see him. He laughed with some complacency, when I told him Campbell's odd expression to me concerning him: "That having seen such a man, was a thing to talk of a century hence,"—as if he could live so long.³

We got into an argument whether the judges who went to India might with propriety engage in trade. Johnson warmly maintained that they might; "For why," he urged, "should not judges get riches, as well as those who deserve them less?" I said, they should have sufficient salaries, and have nothing to take off their attention from the affairs of the public. JOHNSON. "No judge, Sir, can give his whole attention to his office; and it is very proper that he should employ what time he has to himself to his own advantage, in the most profitable manner." "Then, Sir," said Davies, who enlivened the dispute by making it somewhat dramatic, "he may become an insurer; and when he is going to the bench, he may be stopped, 'Your Lordship cannot go yet; here is a bunch of invoices; several ships are about to sail.'" JOHNSON. "Sir, you may as well say a judge should not have a house; for they may come and tell him, 'Your Lordship's house is on fire;' and so, instead of minding the business of his court, he is to be occupied with getting the engine

¹ Plin. Epist. Lib. ii. Ep. 8.

² Mr. Davies was here mistaken. Corelli never was in England.—BURNBY.

³ Mrs. Thrale gives, in her lively style, a sketch of this gentleman: "We save a flashy friend here (at Bath) already, who is much your adorer. I wonder how you will like *him*? An Irishman he is; very handsome, very hot-headed, loud and lively, and sure to be a favourite with you, he tells us, for he can live with a man of ever so odd a temper. *My master* laughs, but likes him, and it diverts me to think what you will do when he professes that he would clean shoes for you; that he would shed his blood for you; with twenty more extravagant flights; and you say *I flatter!* Upon my honour, Sir, and indeed now, as Dr. Campbell's phrase is, I am but a twitter to him." Letters, May 16, 1776.—C.

with the greatest speed. There is no end of this. Every judge who has land, trades to a certain extent in corn or in cattle, and in the land itself; undoubtedly his steward acts for him, and so do clerks for a great merchant. A judge may be a farmer, but he is not to geld his own pigs. A judge may play a little at cards for his amusement; but he is not to play at marbles, or chuck farthing in the Piazza. No, Sir, there is no profession to which a man gives a very great proportion of his time. It is wonderful, when a calculation is made, how little the mind is actually employed in the discharge of any profession. No man would be a judge, upon the condition of being totally a judge. The best employed lawyer has his mind at work but for a small proportion of his time; a great deal of his occupation is merely mechanical. I once wrote for a magazine: I made a calculation, that if I should write but a page a day, at the same rate, I should, in ten years, write nine volumes in folio, of an ordinary size and print." BOSWELL. "Such as 'Carte's History?'" JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir; when a man writes from his own mind, he writes very rapidly.¹ The greatest part of a writer's time is spent in reading, in order to write; a man will turn over half a library, to make one book."

I argued warmly against the judges trading, and mentioned Hale as an instance of a perfect judge, who devoted himself entirely to his office. JOHNSON. "Hale, Sir, attended to other things besides law; he left a great estate." BOSWELL. "That was because what he got accumulated without any exertion and anxiety on his part."

While the dispute went on, Moody once tried to say something on our side. Tom Davies clapped him on the back, to encourage him. Beaucherk, to whom I mentioned this circumstance, said, "that he could not conceive a more humiliating situation than to be clapped on the back by Tom Davies."

We spoke of Rolt, to whose "Dictionary of Commerce" Dr. Johnson wrote the preface. JOHNSON. "Old Gardener, the bookseller, employed Rolt and Smart to write a monthly miscellany, called 'The Universal Visitor.' There was a formal written contract, which Allen the printer saw. Gardener thought as you do of

¹ Johnson certainly did, who had a mind stored with knowledge, and teeming with imagery but the observation is not applicable to writers in general.

the judge. They were bound to write nothing else; they were to have, I think, a third of the profits of his sixpenny pamphlet; and the contract was for ninety-nine years. I wish I had thought of giving this to Thurlow, in the cause about literary property. What an excellent instance would it have been of the oppression of booksellers towards poor authors !” smiling.¹ Davies, zealous for the honour of *the trade*, said Gardener was not properly a bookseller. JOHNSON. “Nay, Sir; he certainly was a bookseller. He had served his time regularly, was a member of the Stationers’ Company, kept a shop in the face of mankind, purchased copyright, and was a *bibliopole*, Sir, in every sense. I wrote for some months in ‘The Universal Visitor’ for poor Smart, while he was mad, not then knowing the terms on which he was engaged to write, and thinking I was doing him good. I hoped his wits would soon return to him. Mine returned to me, and I wrote in ‘The Universal Visitor’ no longer.”

Friday, 7th April, I dined with him at a tavern, with a numerous company.² JOHNSON. “I have been reading ‘Twiss’s Travels in Spain,’³ which are just come out. They are as good as the first book of travels that you will take up. They are as good as those of Keyser or Blainville; nay, as Addison’s, if you except the learning. They are not so good as Brydone’s, but they are better than Poccoke’s. I have not, indeed, cut the leaves yet; but I have read in them where the pages are open, and I do not suppose that what is in the pages which are closed is worse than what is in the open pages. It would seem,” he added, “that Addison had not acquired much Italian learning, for we do not find it introduced into his

¹ There has probably been some mistake as to the terms of this supposed extraordinary contract, the recital of which from hearsay afforded Johnson so much play for his sportive acuteness. Or if it was worded as he supposed, it is so strange that I should conclude it was a joke. Mr. Gardener, I am assured, was a worthy and liberal man.

² At *the Club*, where there were present Mr. Charles Fox (president), Sir J. Reynolds, Drs. Johnson and Percy, Messrs. Beauclerk, Boswell, Chamier, Gibbon, Langton and Steevens: why Mr. Boswell sometimes *sinks the club* is not quite clear. He might very naturally have felt some reluctance to betray the private conversation of a convivial meeting, but that feeling would have operated on *all* occasions. It may, however, be observed that he generally endeavours to confine his report to what was said either by *Johnson* or *himself*.—C.

³ Richard Twiss, Esq. also published a *Treatise on Chess*, and a *Tour through Ireland*. He died in 1691.

writings. The only instance that I recollect is his quoting '*Stavo bene; per star meglio, sto qui.*'"¹

I mentioned Addison's having borrowed many of his classical remarks from Leandro Alberti.² Mr. Beaucherk said, "It was alleged that he had borrowed also from another Italian author." JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, all who go to look for what the classics have said of Italy must find the same passages; and I should think it would be one of the first things the Italians would do on the revival of learning, to collect all that the Roman authors have said of their country."

Ossian being mentioned;—JOHNSON. "Supposing the Irish and Erse languages to be the same, which I do not believe, yet as there is no reason to suppose that the inhabitants of the Highlands and Hebrides ever wrote their native language, it is not to be credited that a long poem was preserved among them. If we had no evidence of the art of writing being practised in one of the counties of England, we should not believe that a long poem was preserved *there*, though in the neighbouring counties, where the same language was spoken, the inhabitants could write." BEAUCHERK. "The ballad of 'Lilliburlero' was once in the mouths of all the people of this country, and is said to have had a great effect in bringing about the revolution. Yet I question whether anybody can repeat it now;"

¹ Addison, however, does not mention where this celebrated epitaph, which has eluded a very diligent inquiry, is found.—MALONE. It is mentioned by old Howell. "The Italian saying may be well applied to poor England:—'I was well—would be better—took physic—and died.'"¹ Lett. Jan. 20, 1647.—C.

² This observation is, as Mr. Markland observes to me, to be found in Lord Chesterfield's Letters to his Son:—"I have been lately informed of an Italian book, written by one Alberti, about fourscore or a hundred years ago, a thick quarto. It is a classical description of Italy; from whence I am assured that Mr. Addison, to save himself trouble, has taken most of his remarks and classical references. I am told that it is an excellent book for a traveller in Italy."—Vol. ii. p. 351. If credit is to be given to Addison himself (and who can doubt his veracity?) this supposition must be groundless. He expressly says, "I have taken care to consider particularly the several passages of the ancient poets, which have any relation to the places or curiosities I met with; for, before I entered on my voyage, I took care to refresh my memory among the classic authors, and to make such collections out of them as I might afterwards have occasion for, &c." Preface to Remarks.—C.

³ Of this celebrated song, Burnet says, "Perhaps never had so slight a thing so great an effect." According to Lord Dartmouth, "there was a particular expression in it which the king remembered he had made use of to the Earl of Dorset, from whence it was concluded that he was the author." The song will be found in Percy's Reliques, vol. ii. p. 376, where it is attributed to Lord Wharton.—MARKLAND.

which shows how improbable it is that much poetry should be preserved by tradition."

One of the company suggested an internal objection to the antiquity of the poetry said to be Ossian's, that we do not find the *wolf* in it, which must have been the case had it been of that age.

The mention of the wolf had led Johnson to think of other wild beasts; and while Sir Johua Reynolds and Mr. Langton were carrying on a dialogue about something which engaged them earnestly, he, in the midst of it, broke out, "Pennant tells of bears." What he added I have forgotten. They went on, which he, being dull of hearing, did not perceive, or, if he did, was not willing to break off his talk; so he continued to vociferate his remarks, and *bear* ("like a word in a catch," as Beauclerk said) was repeatedly heard at intervals; which coming from him who, by those who did not know him, had been so often assimilated to that ferocious animal, while we who were sitting round could hardly stifle laughter, produced a very ludicrous effect. Silence having ensued, he proceeded, "We are told, that the black bear is innocent; but I should not like to trust myself with him." Mr. Gibbon muttered in a low tone of voice, "I should not like to trust myself with *you*." This piece of sarcastic pleasantry was a prudent resolution, if applied to a competition of abilities.¹

Patriotism having become one of our topics, Johnson suddenly uttered, in a strong determined tone, an apophthegm, at which many will start:—"Patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel."² But let it be considered, that he did not mean a real and generous love of our country, but that pretended patriotism, which so many, in all ages and countries, have made a cloak for self-interest. I maintained, that certainly all patriots were not scoundrels. Being

¹ Mr. Green, the anonymous author of the "Diary of a Lover of Literature" (printed as Ipswich), states, under the date of 18th June, 1796, that a friend whom he designates by the initial M (and whom I believe to be my able and obliging friend Sir James Mackintosh), talking to him of the relative ability of Burke and Gibbon, said, "Gibbon might have been cut out of a corner of Burke's mind without his missing it." I fancy, now that enthusiasm has cooled, Sir James would be inclined to allow Gibbon a larger share of mind, though his intellectual powers can never be compared with Burke's.—O.

² This remarkable *sortie*, which has very much amused the world, will hereafter be still more amusing, when it is known, that it appears, by the books of the Club, that at the moment it was uttered, *Mr. Fox was in the chair*.—O.

urged (not by Johnson) to name one exception, I mentioned an eminent person,² whom we all greatly admired. JOHNSON. "Sir, I do not say that he is *not* honest; but we have no reason to conclude from his political conduct that he *is* honest. Were he to accept a place from this ministry, he would lose that character of firmness which he has, and might be turned out of his place in a year. This ministry is neither stable, nor grateful to their friends, as Sir Robert Walpole was; so that he may think it more for his interest to take his chance of his party coming in."

Mrs. Pritchard being mentioned, he said, "Her playing was quite mechanical. It is wonderful how little mind she has. Sir, she had never read the tragedy of Macbeth all through. She no more thought of the play out of which her part was taken, than a shoemaker thinks of the skin out of which the piece of leather of which he is making a pair of shoes is cut."

On Saturday, April 8, I dined with him at Mr. Thrale's, where we met the Irish Dr. Campbell. Johnson had supped the night before at Mrs. Abington's with some fashionable people whom he named; and he seemed much pleased with having made one in so elegant a circle. Nor did he omit to pique his *mistress* a little with jealousy of her housewifery; for he said, with a smile, "Mrs. Abington's jelly, my dear lady, was better than yours."

Mrs. Thrale, who frequently practised a coarse mode of flattery, by repeating his *bon-mots* in his hearing, told us that he had said, a certain celebrated actor³ was just fit to stand at the door of an auction-room with a long pole, and cry, "Pray, gentlemen, walk in;" and that a certain author, upon hearing this, had said, that another still more celebrated actor³ was fit for nothing better than that, and would pick your pocket after you came out. JOHNSON "Nay, my dear lady, there is no wit in what our friend added there is only abuse. You may as well say of any man that he will pick a pocket. Besides, the man who is stationed at the door does not pick people's pockets; that is done within by the auctioneer."

¹ No doubt Mr. Burke.—C.

² Probably Sheridan.—C.

³ Certainly Garrick; the *author* was, perhaps, Murphy: a great friend of the Thrales, and who had occasional differences with Garrick.—C.

Mrs. Thrale told us that Tom Davies repeated, in a very bald manner, the story of Dr. Johnson's first repartee to me, which I have related exactly. He made me say, "*I was born in Scotland,*" instead of "*I come from Scotland;*" so that Johnson's saying, "That, Sir, is what a great many of your countrymen cannot help," had no point, or even meaning; and that upon this being mentioned to Mr. Fitzherbert, he observed, "It is not every man that can *carry a bon-mot.*"

On Monday, April 10, I dined with him at General Oglethorpe's,¹ with Mr. Langton and the Irish Dr. Campbell, whom the general had obligingly given me leave to bring with me. This learned gentleman was thus gratified with a very high intellectual feast, by not only being in company with Dr. Johnson, but with General Oglethorpe, who had been so long a celebrated name both at home and abroad.

I must, again and again, entreat of my readers not to suppose that my imperfect record of conversation contains the whole of what was said by Johnson, or other eminent persons who lived with him. What I have preserved, however, has the value of the most perfect authenticity.

He this day enlarged upon Pope's melancholy remark,

"Man never *is*, but always *to be* blest."

He asserted, that *the present* was never a happy state to any human being; but that, as every part of life, of which we are conscious, was at some point of time a period yet to come, in which felicity was

¹ Let me here be allowed to pay my tribute of most sincere gratitude to the memory of that excellent person, my intimacy with whom was the more valuable to me, because my first acquaintance with him was unexpected and unsolicited. Soon after the publication of my "Account of Corsica," he did me the honour to call on me, and approaching me with a frank courteous air, said, "My name, Sir, is Oglethorpe, and I wish to be acquainted with you." I was not a little flattered to be thus addressed by an eminent man, of whom I had read in Pope, from my early years,

"Or, driven by strong benevolence of soul,
Will fly like Oglethorpe from pole to pole."

I was fortunate enough to be found worthy of his good opinion, insomuch, that I not only was invited to make one in the many respectable companies whom he entertained at his table, but had a cover at his hospitable board every day when I happened to be disengaged; and in his society I never failed to enjoy learned and animated conversation, seasoned with genuine sentiments of virtue and religion.

expected, there was some happiness produced by hope. Being pressed upon this subject, and asked if he really was of opinion, that though, in general, happiness was very rare in human life, a man was not sometimes happy in the moment that was present, he answered, "Never, but when he is drunk."¹

He urged General Oglethorpe to give the world his Life. He said, "I know no man whose Life would be more interesting. If I were furnished with materials, I should be very glad to write it."²

Mr. Scott of Amwell's Elegies were lying in the room. Dr. Johnson observed, "They are very well; but such as twenty people might write." Upon this I took occasion to controvert Horace's maxim,

"——— mediocribus esse poetis

Non Di, non homines, non concessere columnæ:"

for here (I observed) was a very middle-rate poet, who pleased many readers, and therefore poetry of a middle sort was entitled to some esteem; nor could I see why poetry should not, like everything else, have different gradations of excellence, and consequently of value. Johnson repeated the common remark, that "as there is no neces-

¹ It was a gloomy axiom of his, that the pains and miseries of human life outweighed its happiness and good; but on a lady's asking him, whether he would not permit the ease and quiet of common life to be put into the scale of happiness and good, he seemed embarrassed (very unusual with him), and, answering in the affirmative, rose from his seat, as if to avoid the inference and reply, which his answer authorised the lady to make.—MISS REYNOLDS.

Dr. Johnson did not like any one who said they were happy, or who said any one else was so. "It was all *cant*," he would cry; "the dog knows he is miserable all the time." A friend whom he loved exceedingly, told him on some occasion notwithstanding, that his wife's sister was *really* happy, and called upon the lady to confirm his assertion, which she did somewhat roundly as we say, and with an accent and manner capable of offending Dr. Johnson, if her position had not been sufficient, without anything more, to put him in a very ill humour. "If your sister-in-law is really the contented being she professes herself, Sir," said he, "her life gives the lie to every research of humanity; for she is happy without health, without beauty, without money, and without understanding." This story he told me himself; and when I expressed something of the horror I felt, "The same stupidity," said he, "which prompted her to extol felicity she never felt, hindered her from feeling what shocks you on repetition. I tell you, the woman is ugly, and sickly, and foolish, and poor; and would it not make a man hang himself to hear such a creature say it was happy?"—FIOZZI.

² The General seemed unwilling to enter upon it at this time; but upon a subsequent occasion he communicated to me a number of particulars, which I have committed to writing; but I was not sufficiently diligent in obtaining more from him, not apprehending that his friends were so soon to lose him; for notwithstanding his great age, he was very healthy and vigorous, and was at last carried off by a violent fever, which is often fatal at any period of life

sity for our having poetry at all, it being merely a luxury, an instrument of pleasure, it can have no value, unless when exquisite in its kind." I declared myself not satisfied. "Why, then, Sir," said he, "Horace and you must settle it." He was not much in the humour of talking.

No more of his conversation for some days appears in my journal, except that when a gentleman told him he had bought a suit of lace for his lady, he said, "Well, Sir, you have done a good thing and a wise thing." "I have done a good thing," said the gentleman, "but I do not know that I have done a wise thing." JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir; no money is better spent than what is laid out for domestic satisfaction. A man is pleased that his wife is dressed as well as other people; and a wife is pleased that she is dressed."

On Friday, April 14, being Good Friday, I repaired to him in the morning according to my usual custom on that day, and breakfasted with him. I observed that he fasted so very strictly, that he did not even taste bread, and took no milk with his tea; I suppose because it is a kind of animal food.

He entered upon the state of the nation, and thus discoursed: "Sir, the great misfortune now is, that government has too little power. All that it has to bestow must of necessity be given to support itself; so that it cannot reward merit. No man, for instance, can now be made a bishop for his learning and piety; his only chance for promotion is his being connected with somebody who has parliamentary interest. Our several ministers in this reign have outbid each other in concessions to the people. Lord Bute, though a very honourable man,—a man who meant well,—a man who had his blood full of prerogative,—was a theoretical statesman, a book-minister, and thought this country could be governed by the influence of the crown alone. Then, Sir, he gave up a great deal. He advised the king to agree that the judges should hold their places for life, instead of losing them at the accession of a new king. Lord Bute, I suppose, thought to make the king popular by this concession; but the people never minded it; and it was a most impolitic measure. There is no reason why a judge should hold his office for life, more than any other person in public trust. A judge may be partial otherwise than to the crown; we have seen judges

partial to the populace. A judge may become corrupt, and yet there may not be legal evidence against him. A judge may become froward from age. A judge may grow unfit for his office in many ways. It was desirable that there should be a possibility of being delivered from him by a new king. That is now gone by an act of parliament *ex gratiâ* of the crown. Lord Bute advised the king to give up a very large sum of money,¹ for which nobody thanked him. It was of consequence to the king, but nothing to the public, among whom it was divided. When I say Lord Bute advised, I mean, that such acts were done when he was minister, and we are to suppose that he advised them. Lord Bute showed an undue partiality to Scotchmen. He turned out Dr. Nichols,² a very eminent man, from being physician to the king, to make room for one of his countrymen, a man very low in his profession. He had *****³ and **** to go on errands for him. He had occasion for people to go on errands for him ; but he should not have had Scotchmen ; and, certainly, he should not have suffered them to have access to him before the first people in England.”

I told him, that the admission of one of them before the first people in England, which had given the greatest offence, was no more than what happens at every minister's levee, where those who attend are admitted in the order that they have come, which is better than admitting them according to their rank : for if that were to be the rule, a man who has waited all the morning might have the mortification to see a peer, newly come, go in before him, and keep him waiting still. JOHNSON. “True, Sir ; but ****⁴ should not have come to the levee, to be in the way of people of consequence. He

¹ The money arising from the property of the prizes taken before the declaration of war which were given to his Majesty by the peace of Paris, and amounted to upwards of £700,000, and from the lands in the ceded islands, which were estimated at £200,000 more. Surely, there was a noble munificence in this gift from a monarch to his people. And let it be remembered, that during the Earl of Bute's administration, the king was graciously pleased to give up the hereditary revenues of the crown, and to accept, instead of them, of the limited sum of £800,000 a year ; upon which Blackstone observes, that “The hereditary revenues, being put under the same management as the other branches of the public patrimony, will produce more, and be better collected than heretofore ; and the public is a gainer of upwards of £100,000 *per annum* by this disinterested bounty of his Majesty.”—Com. book i. chap. viii. p. 330.

² Frank Nichols, M.D. He was of Exeter College. Died 1778.—HALL.

³ Wedderburn.—C.

⁴ Home.—C.

saw Lord Bute at all times ; and could have said what he had to say at any time, as well as at the levee. There is now no prime minister : there is only an agent for government in the House of Commons. We are governed by the cabinet ; but there is no one head there since Sir Robert Walpole's time." BOSWELL. "What then, Sir, is the use of parliament?" JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, parliament is a large council to the king ; and the advantage of such a council is, having a great number of men of property concerned in the legislature, who for their own interest, will not consent to bad laws. And you must have observed, Sir, the administration is feeble and timid, and cannot act with that authority and resolution which is necessary. Were I in power, I would turn out every man who dared to oppose me. Government has the distribution of offices, that it may be enabled to maintain its authority."

"Lord Bute," he added, "took down too fast, without building up something new." BOSWELL. "Because, Sir, he found a rotten building. The political coach was drawn by a set of bad horses ; it was necessary to change them." JOHNSON. "But he should have changed them one by one."

I told him I had been informed by Mr. Orme, that many parts of the East Indies were better mapped than the Highlands of Scotland. JOHNSON. "That country may be mapped, it must be travelled over." "Nay," said I, meaning to laugh with him at one of his prejudices, "can't you say, it is not *worth* mapping?"

As we walked to St. Clement's church, and saw several shops open upon this most solemn fast-day of the Christian world, I remarked, that one disadvantage arising from the immensity of London was, that nobody was heeded by his neighbour ; there was no fear of censure for not observing Good Friday, as it ought to be kept, and as it is kept in country towns. He said, it was, upon the whole, very well observed even in London. He however owned that London was too large ;¹ but added, "It is nonsense to say the head is too big for the body. It would be as much too big, though the body were ever so large ; that is to say, though the country was ever so extensive. It has no similarity to a head connected with a body."

¹ Yet how enormously the metropolis has increased in population and extent since the year 1775 — C

Dr Wetherell, master of the University College, Oxford, accompanied us home from church ; and after he was gone, there came two other gentlemen, one of whom uttered the common-place complaints, that by the increase of taxes, labour would be dear, other nations would undersell us, and our commerce would be ruined. JOHNSON (smiling). "Never fear, Sir ; our commerce is in a very good state ; and suppose we had no commerce at all, we could live very well on the produce of our own country."¹ I cannot omit to mention, that I never knew any man who was less disposed to be querulous than Johnson. Whether the subject was his own situation, or the state of the public, or the state of human nature in general, though he saw the evils, his mind was turned to resolution, and never to whining or complaint.

We went again to St. Clement's in the afternoon. He had found fault with the preacher in the morning for not choosing a text adapted to the day. The preacher in the afternoon had chosen one extremely proper : "It is finished."

After the evening service he said, "Come, you shall go home with me, and sit just an hour." But he was better than his word ; for after we had drunk tea with Mrs. Williams, he asked me to go up to his study with him, where we sat a long while together in a serene undisturbed frame of mind, sometimes in silence, and sometimes conversing, as we felt ourselves inclined, or more properly speaking, as *he* was inclined ; for during all the course of my long intimacy with him, my respectful attention never abated, and my wish to hear him was such, that I constantly watched every dawning of communication from that great and illuminated mind.

He observed, "All knowledge is of itself of some value. There is nothing so minute or inconsiderable, that I would not rather know it than not. In the same manner, all power, of whatever sort, is of itself desirable. A man would not submit to learn to hem a ruffle of his wife, or his wife's maid ; but if a mere wish could attain it, he would rather wish to be able to hem a ruffle."²

He again advised me to keep a journal fully and minutely, but

¹ See, on this point, a pamphlet entitled, "Britain independent of Commerce," by William Spence, Esq., 1807.

² Johnson said, that he had once attempted to learn knitting from Dempster's sister ; *post* 7th April, 1778.—C.

not to mention such trifles as that meat was too much or too little done, or that the weather was fair or rainy. He had till very near his death a contempt for the notion that the weather affects the human frame.

I told him that our friend Goldsmith had said to me that he had come too late into the world, for that Pope and other poets had taken up the places in the Temple of Fame ; so that as but a few at any period can possess poetical reputation, a man of genius can now hardly acquire it. JOHNSON. "That is one of the most sensible things I have ever heard of Goldsmith. It is difficult to get literally fame, and it is every day growing more difficult. Ah, Sir, that should make a man think of securing happiness in another world, which all who try sincerely for it may attain. In comparison of that, how little are all other things ! The belief of immortality is impressed upon all men, and all men act under an impression of it, however they may talk, and though, perhaps, they may be scarcely sensible of it." I said, it appeared to me that some people had not the least notion of immortality ; and I mentioned a distinguished gentleman of our acquaintance. JOHNSON. "Sir, if it were not for the notion of immortality, he would cut a throat to fill his pockets." When I quoted this to Beauclerk, who knew much more of the gentleman than we did, he said in his acid manner, "He would cut a throat to fill his pockets, if it were not for fear of being hanged."

Dr. Johnson proceeded : "Sir, there is a great cry about infidelity : but there are, in reality, very few infidels. I have heard a person, originally a Quaker, but now, I am afraid, a Deist, say, that he did not believe there were, in all England, above two hundred infidels."

He was pleased to say, "If you come to settle here, we will have one day in the week on which we will meet by ourselves. That is the happiest conversation where there is no competition, no vanity, but a calm quiet interchange of sentiments." In his private register this evening is thus marked,

"Boswell sat with me till night ; we had some serious talk."

It also appears from the same record, that after I left him he was occupied in religious duties, in

“giving Francis, his servant, some directions for preparation to communicate; in reviewing his life, and resolving on better conduct.”

“Easter Eve, April 15, 1775.—I rose more early than is common, after a night disturbed by flatulencies, though I had taken so little. I prayed, but my mind was unsettled, and I did not fix upon the book. After the bread and tea, I trifled, and about three ordered coffee and buns for my dinner. I find more faintness and uneasiness in fasting than I did formerly.—While coffee was preparing, Collier came in, a man whom I had not seen for more than twenty years, but whom I consulted about Macky’s books. We talked of old friends and past occurrences, and eat and drank together. I then read a little in the Testament, and tried Fiddes’s Body of Divinity, but did not settle. I then went to evening prayer, and was tolerably composed.”¹

The humility and piety which he discovers on such occasions is truly edifying. No saint, however, in the course of his religious warfare, was more sensible of the unhappy failure of pious resolves than Johnson. He said one day, talking to an acquaintance on this subject, “Sir, hell is paved with good intentions.”

On Sunday, 16th April, being Easter-day, after having attended the solemn service at St. Paul’s, I dined with Dr. Johnson and Mrs. Williams. I maintained that Horace was wrong in placing happiness in *Nil admirari*, for that I thought admiration one of the most agreeable of all our feelings; and I regretted that I had lost much of my disposition to admire, which people generally do as they advance in life. JOHNSON. “Sir, as a man advances in life, he gets what is better than *admiration*,—*judgment*, to estimate things at their true value.” I still insisted that admiration was more pleasing than judgment, as love is more pleasing than friendship. The feeling of friendship is like that of being comfortably filled with roast beef; love, like being enlivened with champagne. JOHNSON. “No Sir; admiration and love are like being intoxicated with champagne; judgment and friendship like being enlivened. Waller has hit upon the same thought with you: but I don’t believe you

¹ Prayers and Meditations.

² This is a proverbial sentence. “Hell,” says Herbert, “is full of good meanings and wishings.” *Jacula Prudentum*, p. 11, edit. 1651.—MALONE.

have borrowed from Waller.¹ I wish you would enable yourself to borrow more."

He then took occasion to enlarge on the advantages of reading, and combated the idle superficial notion, that knowledge enough may be acquired in conversation. "The foundation," said he, "must be laid by reading. General principles must be had from books, which, however, must be brought to the test of real life. In conversation you never get a system. What is said upon a subject is to be gathered from a hundred people. The parts of a truth, which a man gets thus, are at such a distance from each other that he never attains to a full view."

LETTER 210.

TO BENNET LANGTON, ESQ.

"April 17, 1775."

"DEAR SIR,—I have inquired more minutely about the medicine for the rheumatism, which I am sorry to hear that you still want. The receipt is this:—

"Take equal quantities of flour of sulphur, and flour of mustard-seed, make them an electuary with honey or treacle; and take a bolus as big as a nutmeg several times a day, as you can bear it; drinking after it a quarter of a pint of the infusion of the root of lovage.

"Lovage, in Ray's 'Nomenclature,' is levisticum: perhaps the botanists may know the Latin name. Of this medicine I pretend not to judge. There is all the appearance of its efficacy, which a single instance can afford: the patient was very old, the pain very violent, and the relief, I think, speedy and lasting.

"My opinion of alterative medicine is not high, but *quid tentasse nocebit?* if it does harm, or does no good, it may be omitted; but that it may do good you have, I hope, reason to think is desired by, Sir, your most affectionate, humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

Amoret's as sweet and good
As the most delicious food;
Which but tasted does impart
Life and gladness to the heart."

Sacharissa's beauty's wine,
Which to madness does incline;
Such a liquor as no brain
That is mortal can sustain."

CHAPTER VI.

1775.

Dinner at Owen Cambridge's—Female Portrait Painters—"Good-humoured Fellows"—Isaac Walton's "Lives"—Flattery—History—Early Habits—"The Beggar's Opera"—Richard Brinsley Sheridan—Modern Politics—Sir Roger de Coverley—Visit to Bedlam—Sunday Consultations—Gray's Letters—Alchymy—Johnson's Laugh—Letters to Langton, Mrs. Thrale, &c.—Ramble into the Middle Counties—Tour to France.

ON Tuesday, April 18, he and I were engaged to go with Sir Joshua Reynolds to dine with Mr. Cambridge, at his beautiful villa on the banks of the Thames, near Twickenham. Dr. Johnson's tardiness was such, that Sir Joshua, who had an appointment at Richmond early in the day, was obliged to go by himself on horseback, leaving his coach to Johnson and me. Johnson was in such good spirits, that everything seemed to please him as we drove along.

Our conversation turned on a variety of subjects. He thought portrait-painting an improper employment for a woman.¹ "Public practice of any art," he observed, "and staring in men's faces, is very indelicate in a female." I happened to start a question, whether when a man knows that some of his intimate friends are invited to the house of another friend, with whom they are all equally intimate, he may join them without an invitation. JOHNSON. "No, Sir; he is not to go when he is not invited. They may be invited on purpose to abuse him," smiling.

As a curious instance how little a man knows, or wishes to know, his own character in the world, or rather as a convincing proof that Johnson's roughness was only external, and did not proceed from his heart, I insert the following dialogue. JOHNSON. "It is wonderful, Sir, how rare a quality good-humour is in life. We

¹ This topic was probably suggested to them by Miss Reynolds, who practised that art; and we shall see that one of the last occupations of Johnson's life was to sit for his picture to that lady.—C.

meet with very few good-humoured men." I mentioned four of our friends, none of whom he would allow to be good-humoured. One was *acid*, another was *muddy*, and to others he had objections which have escaped me. Then shaking his head and stretching himself at ease in the coach, and smiling with much complacency, he turned to me and said, "I look upon *myself* as a good-humoured fellow." The epithet *fellow*, applied to the great lexicographer, the stately moralist, the masterly critic, as if it had been *Sam Johnson*, a mere pleasant companion, was highly diverting; and this light notion of himself struck me with wonder. I answered, also smiling, "No, no, Sir, that will *not* do. You are good-natured, but not good-humoured; you are irascible. You have not patience with folly and absurdity. I believe you would pardon them, if there were time to deprecate your vengeance; but punishment follows so quick after sentence, that they cannot escape."

I had brought with me a great bundle of Scotch magazines and newspapers, in which his "Journey to the Western Islands," was attacked in every mode; and I read a great part of them to him, knowing they would afford him entertainment. I wish the writers of them had been present; they would have been sufficiently vexed. One ludicrous imitation of his style, by Mr. Maclaurin, now one of the Scotch judges, with the title of Lord Dreghorn, was distinguished by him from the rude mass. "This," said he, "is the best. But I could caricature my own style much better myself." He defended his remark upon the general insufficiency of education in Scotland; and confirmed to me the authenticity of his witty saying on the learning of the Scotch—"Their learning is like bread in a besieged town: every man gets a little, but no man gets a full meal."¹ "There is," said he, "in Scotland, a diffusion of learning, a certain portion of it widely and thinly spread. A merchant has as much learning as one of their clergy."

He talked of "Isaac Walton's Lives," which was one of his most favourite books. Dr. Donne's life, he said, was the most perfect of them. He observed, that "it was wonderful that Walton,

¹ Mrs. Piozzi repeats this story, probably more truly and more forcibly, though with rather less delicacy of expression—"Every man gets a *mouthful*, but no man a *belly* full."—C.

who was in a very low situation of life, should have been so familiarly received by so many great men, and that at a time when the ranks of society were kept more separate than they are now." He supposed that Walton had then given up his business as a linendraper and sempster, and was was only an author;¹ and added, "that he was a great panegyrist." BOSWELL. "No quality will get a man ~~more~~ friends than a disposition to admire the qualities of others. I do not mean flattery, but a sincere admiration." JOHNSON. "Nay, Sir, flattery pleases very generally. In the first place, the flatterer may think what he says to be true; but, in the second place, whether he thinks so or not, he certainly thinks those whom he flatters of consequence enough to be flattered."

No sooner had we made our bow to Mr. Cambridge, in his library, than Johnson ran eagerly to one side of the room, intent on poring over the backs of the books.² Sir Joshua observed (aside), "He runs to the books as I do to the pictures; but I have the advantage. I can see much more of the pictures than he can of the books." Mr. Cambridge upon this politely said, "Dr. Johnson, I am going, with your pardon, to accuse myself, for I have the same custom which I perceive you have. But it seems odd that one should have such a desire to look at the backs of books." Johnson, ever ready for the contest, instantly started from his reverie, wheeled about, and answered, "Sir, the reason is very plain. Knowledge is of two kinds. We know a subject ourselves, or we know where we can find information upon it. When we inquire into any subject, the first thing we have to do is to know what books have treated of it. This leads us to look at catalogues, and the backs of books in libraries." Sir Joshua observed to me the extraordinary promptitude with which Johnson flew upon an

¹ Johnson's conjecture was erroneous. Walton did not retire from business till 1648. But in 1664, Dr. King, Bishop of Chichester, in a letter prefixed to his "Lives," mentions his having been familiarly acquainted with him for forty years; but in 1631 he was so intimate with Dr. Donne, that he was one of the friends who attended him on his death-bed.—J. BOSWELL, jun.

² The first time he dined with me, he was shown into my book room, and instantly pored over the lettering of each volume within his reach. My collection of books is very miscellaneous, and I feared there might be some among them that he would not like. But seeing the number of volumes very considerable, he said, "You are an honest man to have formed so great an accumulation of knowledge."—BURNET.

argument. "Yes," said I, "he has no formal preparation, no flourishing with his sword; he is through your body in an instant."¹

Johnson was here solaced with an elegant entertainment, a very accomplished family, and much good company; among whom was Mr. Harris of Salisbury, who paid him many compliments on his "Journey to the Western Islands."

The common remark as to the utility of reading history being made;—JOHNSON. "We must consider how very little history there is; I mean real authentic history. That certain kings reigned, and certain battles were fought, we can depend upon as true; but all the colouring, all the philosophy of history is conjecture." BOSWELL. "Then, Sir, you would reduce all history to no better than an almanac, a mere chronological series of remarkable events." Mr. Gibbon, who must at that time have been employed upon his history, of which he published the first volume in the following year, was present; but did not step forth in defence of that species of writing. He probably did not like to *trust* himself with Johnson.

Johnson observed, that the force of our early habits was so great, that though reason approved, nay, though our senses relished a different course, almost every man returned to them. I do not believe there is any observation upon human nature better founded than this; and in many cases, it is a very painful truth; for where early habits have been mean and wretched, the joy and elevation resulting from better modes of life must be damped by the gloomy consciousness of being under an almost inevitable doom to sink back into a situation which we recollect with disgust. It surely may be prevented, by constant attention and unremitting exertion to establish contrary habits of superior efficacy.

"The Beggar's Opera," and the common question, whether it was pernicious in its effects, having been introduced;—JOHNSON. "As to this matter, which has been very much contested, I myself am of opinion, that more influence has been ascribed to 'The Beggar's

- Mrs. Piozzi describes Johnson's promptitude of thought and expression on such occasions by a very happy classical allusion: "His notions rose up like the dragon's teeth sown by Cadmus, all ready clothed, and in a bright armour fit for battle."—C.

Opera' than it in reality ever had ; for I do not believe that any man was ever made a rogue by being present at its representation. At the same time I do not deny that it may have some influence, by making the character of a rogue familiar, and in some degree pleasing."¹ Then collecting himself, as it were, to give a heavy stroke : "There is in it such a *labefaction* of all principles as may be injurious to morality."

While he pronounced this response, we sat in a comical sort of restraint, smothering a laugh, which we were afraid might burst out. In his *Life of Gay*, he has been still more decisive as to the inefficiency of "The Beggar's Opera" in corrupting society. But I have ever thought somewhat differently; for, indeed, not only are the gaiety and heroism of a highwayman very captivating to a youthful imagination, but the arguments for adventurous depredation are so plausible, the allusions so lively, and the contrasts with the ordinary and more painful modes of acquiring property are so artfully displayed, that it requires a cool and strong judgment to resist so imposing an aggregate : yet, I own, I should be very sorry to have "The Beggar's Opera" suppressed ; for there is in it so much of real London life, so much brilliant wit, and such a variety of airs, which, from early association of ideas, engage, soothe, and enliven the mind, that no performance which the theatre exhibits delights me more.

The late "*worthy*" Duke of Queensbury,² as Thomson, in his "*Seasons*," justly characterises him, told me, that when Gay showed him "The Beggar's Opera," his Grace's observation was, "This is a very odd thing, Gay ; I am satisfied that it is either a very good thing, or a very bad thing." It proved the former, be-

¹ A very eminent physician, whose discernment is as acute and penetrating in judging of the human character as it is in his own profession, remarked once at a club where I was, that a lively young man, fond of pleasure, and without money, would hardly resist a solicitation from his mistress to go upon the highway, immediately after being present at the representation of the "Beggars Opera." I have been told of an ingenious observation by Mr. Gibbon, that "The Beggar's Opera may, perhaps, have sometimes increased the number of highwaymen ; but that it has had a beneficial effect in refining that class of men, making them less ferocious, more polite, in short, more like gentlemen." Upon which Mr. Courtenay said, that "Gay was the Orpheus of highwaymen."

² The third Duke of Queensbury, and second Duke of Dover ; the patron of Gay and Thomson. He died in 1778, in the 80th year of his age.—O.

yond the warmest expectations of the author, or his friends. Mr. Cambridge, however, showed us to-day, that there was good reason enough to doubt concerning its success. He was told by Quinn, that during the first night of its appearance it was long in a very dubious state; that there was a disposition to damn it, and that it was saved by the song,

“Oh ponder well! be not severe!”

the audience being much affected by the innocent looks of Polly, when she came to those two lines, which exhibit at once a painful and ridiculous image,

“For on the rope that hangs my dear,
Depends poor Polly’s life.”

Quin himself had so bad an opinion of it, that he refused the part of Captain Macheath, and gave it to Walker, who acquired great celebrity by his grave yet animated performance of it.

We talked of a young gentleman’s marriage¹ with an eminent singer, and his determination that she should no longer sing in public, though his father was very earnest she should, because her talents would be liberally rewarded, so as to make her a good fortune. It was questioned whether the young gentleman, who had not a shilling in the world, but was blest with very uncommon talents, was not foolishly delicate, or foolishly proud, and his father truly rational without being mean. Johnson, with all the high spirit of a Roman senator, exclaimed, “He resolved wisely and nobly to be sure. He is a brave man. Would not a gentleman be disgraced by having his wife singing publicly for hire? No, Sir, there can be no doubt here. I know not if I should not prepare myself for a public singer as readily as let my wife be one.”

Johnson arraigned the modern politics of this country, as entirely devoid of all principle of whatever kind. “Politics,” said he, “are now nothing more than means of rising in the world. With

¹ This, no doubt, refers to Mr. Richard Brinsley Sheridan’s refusal to allow his wife to sing in public. Her singing at Oxford, at the installation of Lord North, as chancellor, in 1773, was put on the footing of obliging his Lordship and the University; and when, on that occasion, several degrees were conferred, in the academic form of “*honoris causa*,” Lord North slyly observed, that Sheridan’s degree should be “*uxoris causa*.”—HALL.

this sole view do men engage in politics, and their whole conduct proceeds upon it. How different in that respect is the state of the nation now from what it was in the time of Charles the First, during the Usurpation and after the Restoration, in the time of Charles the Second. Hudibras affords a strong proof how much hold political principles had then upon the minds of men. There is in Hudibras a great deal of bullion which will always last. But to be sure the brightest strokes of his wit owed their force to the impression of the characters, which was upon men's minds at the time ; to their knowing them, at table and in the street ; in short, being familiar with them ; and above all, to his satire being directed against those whom a little while before they had hated and feared. The nation in general has ever been loyal, has been at all times attached to the monarch, though a few daring rebels have been wonderfully powerful for a time. The murder of Charles the First was undoubtedly not committed with the approbation or consent of the people. Had that been the case, parliament would not have ventured to consign the regicides to their deserved punishment. And we know what exuberance of joy there was when Charles the Second was restored. If Charles the Second had bent all his mind to it, had made it his sole object, he might have been as absolute as Louis the Fourteenth." A gentleman observed he would have done no harm if he had. JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, absolute princes seldom do any harm. But they who are governed by them are governed by chance. There is no security for good government." CAMBRIDGE. "There have been many sad victims to absolute government." JOHNSON. "So, Sir, have there been popular factions." BOSWELL. "The question is, which is worst, one wild beast or many ?"

Johnson praised "The Spectator," particularly the character of Sir Roger de Coverley. He said, "Sir Roger did not die a violent death, as has been generally fancied. He was not killed ; he died only because others were to die, and because his death afforded an opportunity to Addison for some very fine writing. We have the example of Cervantes' making Don Quixote die. I never could see why Sir Roger is represented as a little cracked. It appears to me that the story of the widow was intended to have something superinduced upon it ; but the superstructure did not come."

Somebody found fault with writing verses in a dead language, maintaining that they were merely arrangements of so many words, and laughed at the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, for sending forth collections of them not only in Greek and Latin, but even in Syriac, Arabic, and other more unknown tongues. JOHNSON. "I would have as many of these as possible; I would have verses in every language that there are the means of acquiring. Nobody imagines that an university is to have at once two hundred poets: but it should be able to show two hundred scholars. Peiresc's¹ death was lamented, I think, in forty languages. And I would have had at every coronation, and every death of a king, every *Gaudium*, and every *Luctus*, university-verses, in as many languages as can be acquired. I would have the world be thus told, 'Here is a school where everything may be learnt.'"

Having set out next day on a visit to the Earl of Pembroke, at Wilton, and to my friend Mr. Temple, at Mamhead, in Devonshire, and not having returned to town till the 2d of May, I did not see Dr. Johnson for a considerable time, and during the remaining part of my stay in London kept very imperfect notes of his conversation, which had I according to my usual custom written out at large soon after the time, much might have been preserved, which is now irretrievably lost. I can now only record some particular scenes, and a few fragments of his *memorabilia*. But to make some amends for my relaxation of diligence in one respect, I can present my readers with arguments upon two law cases, with which he favoured me.

On Saturday, the 6th of May, we dined by ourselves at the Mitre, and he dictated to me what follows, to obviate the complaint already mentioned [p. 73], which had been made in the form of an action in the Court of Session by Dr. Memis, of Aberdeen, that in the same translation of a charter in which *physicians* were mentioned, he was called *doctor of medicine*.

"There are but two reasons for which a physician can decline the title of *doctor of medicine*—because he supposes himself disgraced by the doctorship,

¹ This very learned Frenchman was born in 1580, and died 1687. His *Life*, written in Latin by Gassendi, was translated into English by Dr. Rand, and dedicated to John Evelyn.

or supposes the doctorship disgraced by himself. To be disgraced by a title which he shares in common with every illustrious name in his profession, with Boerhaave, with Arbuthnot, and with Cullen, can surely diminish no man's reputation. It is, I suppose, to the doctorate, from which he shrinks, that he owes his right of practising physic. A doctor of medicine is a physician under the protection of the laws, and by the stamp of authority. The physician who is not a doctor usurps a profession, and is authorised only by himself to decide upon health and sickness, and life and death. That this gentleman is a doctor, his diploma makes evident; a diploma not obtruded upon him, but obtained by solicitation, and for which fees were paid. With what countenance any man can refuse the title which he has either begged or bought, is not easily discovered.

"All verbal injury must comprise in it either some false position, or some unnecessary declaration of defamatory truth. That in calling him doctor, a false appellation was given him, he himself will not pretend, who at the same time that he complains of the title, would be offended if we supposed him to be not a doctor. If the title of doctor be a defamatory truth, it is time to dissolve our colleges; for why should the public give salaries to men whose approbation is reproach? It may likewise deserve the notice of the public to consider what help can be given to the professors of physic, who all share with this unhappy gentleman the ignominious appellation, and of whom the very boys in the street are not afraid to say, *There goes the doctor*.

"What is implied by the term doctor is well known. It distinguishes him to whom it is granted, as a man who has attained such knowledge of his profession as qualifies him to instruct others. A doctor of law is a man who can form lawyers by his precepts. A doctor of medicine is a man who can teach the art of curing diseases. This is an old axiom which no man has yet thought fit to deny. *Nil dat quod non habet*. Upon this principle to be a doctor implies skill, for *nemo docet quod non didicit*. In England, whoever practises physic, not being a doctor, must practise by a licence; but the doctorate conveys a licence in itself.

"By what accident it happened that he and the other physicians were mentioned in different terms, where the terms themselves were equivalent, or where in effect that which was applied to him was the most honourable, perhaps they who wrote the paper cannot now remember. Had they expected a lawsuit to have been the consequence of such petty variation, I hope they would have avoided it.¹ But, probably, as they meant no ill, they suspected no danger, and, therefore, consulted only what appeared to them propriety or convenience."

A few days afterwards, I consulted him upon a cause, *Paterson*

¹ In justice to Dr. Memis, though I was against him as an advocate, I must mention, that he objected to the variation very earnestly, before the translation was printed off.

and others against *Alexander and others*, which had been decided by a casting vote in the Court of Session, determining that the corporation of Stirling was corrupt, and setting aside the election of some of their officers, because it was proved that three of the leading men who influenced the majority had entered into an unjustifiable compact, of which, however, the majority were ignorant. He dictated to me, after a little consideration, the following sentences upon the subject.

“There is a difference between majority and superiority; majority is applied to number, and superiority to power; and power, like many other things, is to be estimated *non numero sed pondere*. Now though the greater *number* is not corrupt, the greater *weight* is corrupt, so that corruption predominates in the borough, taken *collectively*, though, perhaps, taken *numerically*, the greater part may be uncorrupt. That borough, which is so constituted as to act corruptly, is in the eye of reason corrupt, whether it be by the uncontrollable power of a few, or by an accidental pravity of the multitude. The objection, in which is urged the injustice of making the innocent suffer with the guilty, is an objection not only against society, but against the possibility of society. All societies, great and small, subsist upon this condition; that as the individuals derive advantages from union, they may likewise suffer inconveniences; that as those who do nothing, and sometimes those who do ill, will have the honours and emoluments of general virtue and general prosperity, so those likewise who do nothing, or perhaps do well, must be involved in the consequences of predominant corruption.”

This, in my opinion, was a very nice case; but the decision was affirmed in the House of Lords.

On Monday, May 8, we went together and visited the mansions of Bedlam. I had been informed that he had once been there before with Mr. Wedderburne (now Lord Loughborough), Mr. Murphy, and Mr. Foote; and I had heard Foote give a very entertaining account of Johnson's happening to have his attention arrested by a man who was very furious, and who, while beating his straw, supposed it was William, Duke of Cumberland, whom he was punishing for his cruelties in Scotland, in 1746.¹ There was nothing peculiarly remarkable this day; but the general contemplation of insanity

¹ My very honourable friend, General Sir George Howard, who served in the Duke of Cumberland's army, has assured me that the cruelties were not imputable to his Royal Highness.—B.

was very affecting. I accompanied him home, and dined and drank tea with him.

Talking of an acquaintance of ours, distinguished for knowing an uncommon variety of miscellaneous articles both in antiquities and polite literature, he observed, "You know, Sir, he runs about with little weight upon his mind." And talking of another very ingenious gentleman, who from the warmth of his temper was at variance with many of his acquaintance, and wished to avoid them, he said, "Sir, he lives the life of an outlaw."

On Friday, May 12, as he had been so good as to assign me a room in his house, where I might sleep occasionally, when I happened to sit with him to a late hour, I took possession of it this night, found everything in excellent order, and was attended by honest Francis with a most civil assiduity. I asked Johnson whether I might go to a consultation with another lawyer upon Sunday, as that appeared to me to be doing work as much in my way, as if an artisan should work on the day appropriated for religious rest. JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, when you are of consequence enough to oppose the practice of consulting upon Sunday, you should do it: but you may go now. It is not criminal, though it is not what one should do, who is anxious for the preservation and increase of piety, to which a peculiar observance of Sunday is a great help. The distinction is clear between what is of moral and what is of ritual obligation."

LETTER 211.

TO MRS. THRALE.

"May 12, 1775.

"I wish I could say or send anything to divert you; but I have done nothing and seen nothing. Mr. Twiss, hearing that you talked of despoiling his book of the fine print, has sent you a copy to frame. He is going to Ireland, and I have given him letters to Dr. Leland and Mr. Falkner.¹ Mr. M[ontagu] is so ill that the lady is not visible; but yesterday I had I know not how much kiss of Mrs. Abington, and very good looks from Miss * * * *, the maid of honour.

"Boswell has made me promise not to go to Oxford till he leaves London; I had no great reason for haste, and therefore might as well gratify a friend. I am always proud and pleased to have my company desired. Boswell would have thought my absence a loss, and I know not who else would have considered my presence as a profit. He has entered himself at the Temple, and I

¹ George Faulkener, the celebrated printer.—O.

joined in his bond. He is to plead before the Lords, and hopes very nearly to gain the cost of his journey. He lives much with his friend Paoli, who says, a man must see Wales to enjoy England.

"The book which is now most read, but which, as far as I have gone, is but dull, is Gray's Letters, prefixed by Mr. Mason to his poems. I have borrowed mine, and therefore cannot lend it, and I can hardly recommend the purchase.¹

"I have offended; and, what is stranger, have justly offended the nation of *Rasay*. If they could come hither, they would be as fierce as the Americans. *Rasay* has written to Boswell an account of the injury done him, by representing his home as subordinate to that of Dunvegan. Boswell has his letter, and I believe copied my answer. I have appeased him, if a degraded chief can possibly be appeased: but it will be thirteen days—days of resentment and discontent—before my recantation can reach him. Many a dirk will imagination, during that interval, fix in my heart. I really question if at this time my life would not be in danger, if distance did not secure it. Boswell will find his way to Streatham before he goes, and will detail this great affair."

On Saturday, May 13, I breakfasted with him by invitation, accompanied by Mr. Andrew Crosbie, a Scotch advocate, whom he had seen at Edinburgh, and the Hon. Colonel (now General) Edward Stopford, brother to Lord Courtown, who was desirous of being introduced to him. His tea and rolls and butter, and whole breakfast apparatus, were all in such decorum, and his behaviour was so courteous, that Colonel Stopford was quite surprised, and wondered at his having heard so much said of Johnson's slovenliness and roughness. I have preserved nothing of what passed, except that Crosbie pleased him much by talking learnedly of alchymy, as to which Johnson was not a positive unbeliever, but rather delighted in considering what progress had actually been made in the transmutation of metals, what near approaches there had been to the making of gold; and told us that it was affirmed that a person in the Russian dominions had discovered the secret, but died without revealing it, as imagining it would be prejudicial to society. He added, that it was not impossible but it might in time be generally known.

¹ Nothing but a strong prejudice could have made Johnson thus speak of those very entertaining letters.—C. Are we to attribute Johnson's disparagement of Gray's Letters to the frigid commendation bestowed upon the "Prologue on the Opening of Drury Lane," and the somewhat contemptuous allusion to their author,—"*the same man's verses are far from ad!*"—MARKLAND.

It being asked whether it was reasonable for a man to be angry at another whom a woman had preferred to him? JOHNSON. "I do not see, Sir, that it is reasonable for a man to be angry at another, whom a woman has preferred to him : but angry he is, no doubt; and he is loth to be angry at himself."

Before setting out for Scotland on the 23d, I was frequently in his company at different places, but during this period have recorded only two remarks; one concerning Garrick: "He has not Latin enough. He finds out the Latin by the meaning, rather than the meaning by the Latin." And another concerning writers of travels, who, he observed, "were more defective than any other writers."

I passed many hours with him on the 17th, of which I find all my memorial is, "much laughing." It should seem he had that day been in a humour for jocularly and merriment, and upon such occasions I never knew a man laugh more heartily. We may suppose that the high relish of a state so different from his habitual gloom, produced more than ordinary exertions of that distinguishing faculty of man, which has puzzled philosophers so much to explain. Johnson's laugh was as remarkable as any circumstance in his manner. It was a kind of good-humoured growl. Tom Davies described it drolly enough: "He laughs like a rhinoceros."

LETTER 212.

TO BENNET LANGTON, ESQ.

"May 21, 1775.

"DEAR SIR,—I have an old amanuensis in great distress. I have given what I think I can give, and begged till I cannot tell where to beg again. I put into his hands this morning four guineas. If you could collect three guineas more, it would clear him from his present difficulty. I am, Sir, your most humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON." 1

LETTER 213.

TO MRS. THRALE.

"May 23, 1775.

"One thing or other still hinders me, besides, perhaps, what is the great hindrance, that I have no great mind to go. Boswell went away at two this morning. L[angton] I suppose goes this week. B[oswell] got two and forty guineas in fees while he was here. He has, by his wife's persuasion and mine, taken down a present for his mother-in-law. . . . I am not sorry that you read Boswell's journal. Is it not a merry piece? There is much in it about poor me.

He had written to Mrs. Thrale the day before. "Peyton and Macbean are both starving, and I cannot keep them."—C.

"Do not buy C——'s travels, they are duller than T[wiss]'s. W—— is too fond of words, but you may read him. I shall take care that Adair's account of America may be sent you, for I shall have it of my own. Beattie has called once to see me. He lives grand at the Archbishop's."

LETTER 214.

TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"May 27, 1775.

"DEAR SIR,—I make no doubt but you are now safely lodged in your own habitation, and have told all your adventures to Mrs. Boswell and Miss Veronica. Pray teach Veronica to love me. Bid her not mind mamma.

"Mrs. Thrale has taken cold, and been very much disordered, but I hope is grown well. Mr. Langton went yesterday to Lincolnshire, and has invited Nicolaida¹ to follow him. Beauchamp talks of going to Bath. I am to set out on Monday; so there is nothing but dispersion.

"I have returned Lord Hailes's entertaining sheets, but must stay till I come back for more, because it will be inconvenient to send them after me in my vagrant state.

"I promised Mrs. Macaulay² that I would try to serve her son at Oxford. I have not forgotten it, nor am unwilling to perform it. If they desire to give him an English education, it should be considered whether they cannot send him for a year or two to an English school. If he comes immediately from Scotland, he can make no figure in our Universities. The schools in the north, I believe, are cheap; and when I was a young man, were eminently good.

"There are two little books published by the Foulis, *Telemachus* and *Collins's Poems*, each a shilling; I would be glad to have them.

"Make my compliments to Mrs. Boswell, though she does not love me. You see what perverse things ladies are, and how little fit to be trusted with feudal estates. When she mends and loves me, there may be more hope of her daughters.

"I will not send compliments to my friends by name, because I would be loth to leave any out in the enumeration. Tell them, as you see them, how well I speak of Scotch politeness, and Scotch hospitality, and Scotch beauty, and of everything Scotch, but Scotch oat-cakes and Scotch prejudices.

"Let me know the answer of *Rasay*, and the decision relating to Sir Allan.³ I am, my dearest Sir, with great affection, &c. SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 215.

TO MRS. THRALE.⁴

"Oxford, June 1, 1775.—I did not make the epitaph⁵ before last night, and this morning I have found it too long; I sent it to you as it is to pacify you,

¹ A learned Greek.—B.

² Wife of the Rev. Kenneth Macaulay, author of "The History of St. Kilda."

³ A lawsuit carried on by Sir Allan Maclean, chief of his clan, to recover certain parts of his family estates from the Duke of Argyle.

⁴ In the latter end of May he set out on what he called "his annual ramble to the middle counties."—C.

⁵ On Mrs. Salusbury.—O.

and will make it shorter. Don't suppose that I live here as we live at Streatham. I went this morning to the chapel at six, and if I were to stay would try to conform to all wholesome rules. Mr. Coulson¹ is well, and still willing to keep me, but I delight not in being long here. Mr. Smollett of Loch-Lomond, and his lady have been here—we were glad to meet.”

“June 6, 1775.—Such is the uncertainty of all human things, that Mr. Coulson] has quarrelled with me. He says I raise the laugh upon him, and he is an independent man, and all he has is his own, and he is not used to such things. And so I shall have no more good of Coulson], of whom I never had any good but flattery, which my dear mistress knows I can have at home. . . . Here I am, and how to get away I do not see, for the power of departure, otherwise than in a post-chaise, depends upon accidental vacancies in passing coaches, of which all but one in a week pass through this place at three in the morning. After that one I have sent, but with little hope; yet I shall be very unwilling to stay here another week.”

“June 7, 1775.—Coulson] and I are pretty well again. I grudge the cost of going to Lichfield—Frank and I—in a post-chaise—yet I think of thundering away to-morrow. So you will write your next dear letter to Lichfield.”

“Lichfield, June 11, 1775.—Lady Smith is settled here at last, and sees company in her new house. I went on Saturday. Poor Lucy Porter has her hand in a bag, so unable by the gout that she cannot dress herself. I go every day to Stowehill: both the sisters² are now at home. I sent Mrs. Aston a ‘Taxation,’ and sent it to nobody else, and Lucy borrowed it. Mrs. Aston, since that, inquired by a messenger when I was expected. ‘I can tell nothing about it,’ said Lucy: ‘when he is to be here, I suppose she’ll know.’ Everybody remembers you all. You left a good impression behind you. I hope you will do the same at [Lewis]. Do not make them speeches. Unusual compliments, to which there is no stated and prescriptive answer, embarrass the feeble, who do not know what to say, and disgust the wise, who, knowing them to be false, suspect them to be hypocritical. . . . You never told me, and I omitted to inquire, how you were entertained by Boswell’s ‘Journal.’ One would think the man had been hired to be a spy upon me; he was very diligent, and caught opportunities of writing from time to time. You may now conceive yourself tolerably well acquainted with the expedition. Folks want me to go to Italy, but I say you are not for it.”

Lichfield, June 13, 1775.—I now write from Mrs. Cobb’s, where I have had custard. Nothing considerable has happened since I wrote, only I am sorry to see Miss Porter so bad, and I am not pleased to find that after a very comfortable intermission, the old flatulence distressed me again last night. The world is full of ups and downs, as I think, I told you once before.—Lichfield is full of *box-clubs*. The ladies have one for their own sex. They have incor-

¹ Mr. Coulson, of University College.

² Mrs. Gastrell and Miss Aston.—G.

porated themselves under the appellation of the Amicable Society; and pay each twopence a week to the box. Any woman who can produce the weekly twopence is admitted to the society; and when any of the poor subscribers is in want, she has six shillings a week; and, I think, when she dies, five pounds are given to her children. Lucy is not one, nor Mrs. Cobb. The subscribers are always quarrelling; and every now and then, a lady, in a fume, withdraws her name; but they are an hundred pounds beforehand. Mr. Green has got a cast of Shakspeare, which he holds to be a very exact resemblance. There is great lamentation here for the death of *Col.* Lucy is of opinion that he was wonderfully handsome. Boswell is a favourite, but he had lost ground since I told them that he is married, and all hope is over."

"Ashbourne, July 15, 1775.—Poor Baretti! do not quarrel with him; to neglect him a little will be sufficient. He means only to be frank, and manly, and independent, and perhaps, as you say, a little wise. To be frank, he thinks, is to be cynical, and to be independent to be rude. Forgive him, dearest lady, the rather because of his misbehaviour; I am afraid he has learned part of me. I hope to set him hereafter a better example."

"Ashbourne, July 21, 1775 —You and [Baretti] are friends again. My dear mistress has the quality of being easily reconciled, and not easily offended. Kindness is a good thing in itself; and there are few things that are worthy of anger, and still fewer that can justify malignity. I am glad you read Boswell's Journal. You are now sufficiently informed of the whole transaction, and need not regret that you did not make the tour of the Hebrides."

"Lichfield, [July 27,] 1775.—I have passed one day at Birmingham with my old friend Hector—there's a name! and his sister, an old love. My mistress is grown much older than my friend.

"O quid habes illius, illius
Quæ spirabat amores
Quæ me surpuerat mihi."

Time will impair the body, and uses us well if it spares the mind."

After my return to Scotland, I wrote three letters to him, from which I extract the following passages:—

"I have seen Lord Hailes since I came down. He thinks it wonderful that you are pleased to take so much pains in revising his 'Annals.' I told him that you said you were well rewarded by the entertainment which you had in reading them."

"There has been a numerous flight of Hebrideans in Edinburgh this summer, whom I have been happy to entertain in my house. Mr Donald Mac

¹ He returned to town about the end of August.—O.

queen¹ and Lord Monboddo supped with me one evening. They joined in controverting your proposition, that the Gaelic of the Highlands and Isles of Scotland was not written till of late."

"My mind has been somewhat dark this summer. I have need of your warming and vivifying rays; and I hope I shall have them frequently. I am going to pass some time with my father at Auchinleck."

LETTER 216

TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"London Aug. 27, 1775.

"DEAR SIR,—I am returned from the annual ramble into the middle counties. Having seen nothing I had not seen before, I have nothing to relate. Time has left that part of the island few antiquities; and commerce has left the people no singularities.—I was glad to go abroad, and, perhaps, glad to come home; which is in other words, I was, I am afraid, weary of being at home, and weary of being abroad. Is not this the state of life? But, if we confess this weariness, let us not lament it; for all the wise and all the good say, that we may cure it. "

"For the black fumes which rise in your mind, I can prescribe nothing but that you disperse them by honest business or innocent pleasure, and by reading, sometimes easy and sometimes serious. Change of place is useful; and I hope that your residence at Auchinleck will have many good effects. . . . That I should have given pain to Rasay, I am sincerely sorry; and am therefore very much pleased that he is no longer uneasy. He still thinks that I have represented him as personally giving up the chieftainship. I meant only that it was no longer contested between the two houses, and supposed it settled, perhaps, by the cession of some remote generation, in the house of Dunvegan. I am sorry the advertisement was not continued for three or four times in the paper.

"That Lord Monboddo and Mr. Macqueen should controvert a position contrary to the imaginary interest of literary or national prejudice, might be easily imagined; but of a standing fact there ought to be no controversy; if there are men with tails, catch a *homo caudatus*; if there was writing of old in the Highlands or Hebrides, in the Erse language, produce the manuscripts. Where men write they will write to one another, and some of their letters, in families studious of their ancestry, will be kept. In Wales there are many manuscripts.

"I have now three parcels of Lord Hailes's history, which I purpose to return all the next week: that his respect for my little observations should keep his work in suspense, makes one of the evils of my journey. It is in our language, I think, a new mode of history which tells all that is wanted, and, I suppose, all that is known, without laboured splendour of language, or affected

¹ The very learned minister in the Isle of Sky, whom both Dr. Johnson and I have mentioned with regard.

subtily of conjecture. The exactness of his dates raises my wonder. He seems to have the closeness of Henault without his constraint.

"Mrs. Thrale was so entertained with your 'Journal,'¹ that she almost read herself blind. She has a great regard for you.

"Of Mrs. Boswell, though she knows in her heart that she does not love me, I am always glad to hear any good, and hope that she and the little dear ladies will have neither sickness nor any other affliction. But she knows that she does not care what becomes of me, and for that she may be sure that I think her very much to blame.

"Never, my dear Sir, do you take it into your head to think that I do not love you; you may settle yourself in full confidence both of my love and esteem: I love you as a kind man, I value you as a worthy man, and hope in time to reverence you as a man of exemplary piety. I hold you, as Hamlet has it, 'in my heart of hearts, and therefore, it is little to say, that I am, Sir, your affectionate humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 217: TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"London, Aug. 30, 1775.

"SIR,—If in these papers² there is little alteration attempted, do not suppose me negligent. I have read them perhaps more closely than the rest; but I find nothing worthy of an objection. Write to me soon, and write often, and tell me all your honest heart. I am, Sir, yours affectionately,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 218. TO MRS. LUCY PORTER.

"London, Sept. 9, 1775.

"DEAR MADAM,—I have sent your books by the carrier, and in Sandys's Travels you will find your glasses. I have written this post to the ladies at Stowe-hill, and you may the day after you have this, or at any other time, send Mrs. Gastrel's books.

"Be pleased to make my compliments to all my good friends. I hope the poor dear hand is recovered, and you are now able to write, which, however, you need not do, for I am going to Brighthelmstone, and when I come back will take care to tell you. In the meantime take great care of your health, and drink as much as you can. I am, dearest love, your most humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 219. TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"Sept. 14, 1775.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I now write to you, lest in some of your freaks and humours you should fancy yourself neglected. Such fancies I must entreat you never to admit, at least never to indulge; for my regard for you is so radiated and fixed, that it is become part of my mind, and cannot be effaced but

¹ A "Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides," which that lady read in the original manuscript.

² Another parcel of Lord Hailes's "Annals of Scotland."

by some cause uncommonly violent; therefore, whether I write or not, set your thoughts at rest. I now write to tell you that I shall not very soon write again, for I am to set out to-morrow on another journey.—Your friends are all well at Streatham, and in Leicester Fields.¹ Make my compliments to Mrs. Boswell, if she is in good humour with me. I am, Sir, &c.

“SAM. JOHNSON.”

What he mentions in such light terms as, “I am to set out to-morrow on another journey,” I soon afterwards discovered was no less than a tour to France with Mr. and Mrs. Thrale. This was the only time in his life that he went upon the continent.

LETTER 220.

TO MR. ROBERT LEVET.

“Calais, Sept. 18, 1775.

“DEAR SIR,—We are here in France, after a very pleasing passage of no more than six hours. I know not when I shall write again, and therefore I write now, though you cannot suppose that I have much to say. You have seen France yourself. From this place we are going to Rouen, and from Rouen to Paris, where Mr. Thrale designs to stay about five or six weeks. We have a regular recommendation to the English resident, so we shall not be taken for vagabonds. We think to go one way and return another, and see as much as we can. I will try to speak a little French; I tried hitherto but little, but I spoke sometimes. If I heard better, I suppose I should learn faster. I am, Sir, your humble servant,

“SAM. JOHNSON.”

LETTER 221.

TO THE SAME.

“Paris, Oct. 22, 1775.

“DEAR SIR,—We are still here, commonly very busy in looking about us. We have been to-day at Versailles. You have seen it, and I shall not describe it. We came yesterday from Fontainebleau, where the court is now. We went to see the king and queen at dinner, and the queen was so impressed by Miss,² that she sent one of the gentlemen to inquire who she was. I find all true that you have ever told me at Paris. Mr. Thrale is very liberal, and keeps us two coaches, and a very fine table; but I think our cookery very bad. Mrs. Thrale got into a convent of English nuns, and I talked with her through the grate, and I am very kind used by the English Benedictine friars. But upon the whole I cannot make much acquaintance here; and though the churches, palaces, and some private houses are very magnificent, there is no very great pleasure after having seen many, in seeing more; at least the pleasure, whatever it be, must some time have an end, and we are beginning to think when we shall come home. Mr. Thrale calculates that as we left Streatham on the 15th of September, we shall see it again about the 15th of November.

¹ Where Sir Joshua Reynolds lived.

² Miss Thrale.

"I think I had not been on this side of the sea five days before I found a sensible improvement in my health. I ran a race in the rain this day, and beat Baretti. Baretti is a fine fellow, and speaks French, I think, quite as well as English.

"Make my compliments to Mrs. Williams; and give my love to Francis; and tell my friends that I am not lost. I am, dear Sir, your affectionate humble, &c.

"SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 222.

TO DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON.

"Edinburgh, Oct. 24, 1775.

"MY DEAR SIR,—If I had not been informed that you were at Paris, you should have had a letter from me by the earliest opportunity, announcing the birth of my son, on the 9th instant; I have named him Alexander, after my father. I now write, as I suppose your fellow-traveller, Mr. Thrale, will return to London this week, to attend his duty in parliament, and that you will not stay behind him.

"I send another parcel of Lord Hailes's 'Annals.' I have undertaken to solicit you for a favour to him, which he thus requests in a letter to me: 'I intend soon to give you 'The Life of Robert Bruce,' which you will be pleased to transmit to Dr. Johnson. I wish that you could assist me in a fancy which I have taken, of getting Dr. Johnson to draw a character of Robert Bruce, from the account that I give of that prince. If he finds materials for it in my work, it will be a proof that I have been fortunate in selecting the most striking incidents.'

"I suppose by 'The Life of Robert Bruce,' his Lordship means that his 'Annals' which relates to the history of that prince, and not a separate work.

"Shall we have, 'A Journey to Paris,' from you in the winter? You will, I hope, at any rate, be kind enough to give me some account of your French travels very soon, for I am very impatient. What a different scene have you viewed this autumn, from that which you viewed in autumn 1773! I ever am, my dear Sir, your much obliged and affectionate humble servant,

"JAMES BOSWELL."

LETTER 223.

TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"London, Nov. 16, 1775.

"DEAR SIR,—I am glad that the young laird is born, and an end, as I hope, put to the only difference that you can ever have with Mrs. Boswell.¹ I know that she does not love me; but I intend to persist in wishing her well till I get the better of her.

"Paris is, indeed, a place very different from the Hebrides, but it is to a

¹ I had the pleasure of his acquaintance. He was a high-spirited, clever, and amiable gentleman; and, like his father, of a frank and social disposition; but it is said that he did not relish the recollections of our author's devotion to Dr. Johnson; like old Lord Auchinleck, he seemed to think it a kind of derogation. He was created a Baronet in 1821.—C.

² This alludes to my old feudal principle of preferring male to female succession.

hasty traveller not so fertile of novelty, nor affords so many opportunities of remark. I cannot pretend to tell the public anything of a place better known to many of my readers than to myself. We can talk of it when we meet.

"I shall go next week to Streatham, from whence I purpose to send a parcel of the 'History' every post. Concerning the character of Bruce, I can only say, that I do not see any great reason for writing it; but I shall not easily deny what Lord Hailes and you concur in desiring.

"I have been remarkably healthy all the journey, and hope you and your family have known only that trouble and danger which has so happily terminated. Among all the congratulations that you may receive, I hope you believe none more warm or sincere than those of, dear Sir, your most affectionate,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 224.

TO MRS. LUCY PORTER.

"Nov. 16, 1775.

"DEAR MADAM,—This week I came home from Paris. I have brought you a little box, which I thought pretty; but I know not whether it is properly a snuff-box, or a box for some other use. I will send it, when I can find an opportunity. I have been through the whole journey remarkably well. My fellow-travellers were the same whom you saw at Lichfield, only we took Baretta with us. Paris is not so fine a place as you would expect. The palaces and churches, however, are very splendid and magnificent; and what would please you, there are many very fine pictures; but I do not think their way of life commodious or pleasant.

"Let me know how your health has been all this while. I hope the fine summer has given you strength sufficient to encounter the winter.

"Make my compliments to all my friends; and, if your fingers will let you, write to me, or let your maid write, if it be troublesome to you. I am, dear Madam, your most affectionate humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 225.

TO THE SAME.

"December, 1775.

"DEAR MADAM,—Some weeks ago I wrote to you, to tell you that I was just come home from a ramble, and hoped that I should have heard from you. I am afraid winter has laid hold on your fingers, and hinders you from writing. However, let somebody write, if you cannot, and tell me how you do, and a little of what has happened at Lichfield among our friends. I hope you are all well.

"When I was in France, I thought myself growing young, but I am afraid that cold weather will take part of my new vigour from me. Let us, however, take care of ourselves, and lose no part of our health by negligence.

"I never knew whether you received the Commentary on the New Testament, and the Travels, and the glassos. Do, my dear love, write to me; and

do not let us forget each other. This is the season of good wishes, and I wish you all good. I have not lately seen Mr. Porter, nor heard of him. Is he with you?

"Be pleased to make my compliments to Mrs. Adey, and Mrs. Cobb, and all my friends; and when I can do any good, let me know. I am, dear Madam, yours most affectionately,

"SAM. JOHNSON,"

CHAPTER VII.

1775.

Excursion into France—Paris—Benedictine Monks—Cholsi—Palais-Royal—Mrs. Fermor—Palais-Bourbon—Fontainebleau—Versailles—Trianon—Santerre, the Brewer—King's Library—Sorbonne—St. Cloud—Sève—Bellevue—Meudon—Grand-Chartreux—Luxembourg—Friar Wilkes—St. Denis—Chantilly—Compiègne—Cambray—State of Society in France—Madame de Boufflers—Voltaire—Dr. Burney's Collectanea—Letters to Mrs. Montagu, &c.

It is to be regretted, that Johnson did not write an account of his travels in France; for as he is reported to have once said, that "he could write the life of a broomstick,"¹ so, notwithstanding so many former travellers have exhausted almost every subject for remark in that great kingdom, his very accurate observation, and peculiar vigour of thought and illustration, would have produced a wonderful work. During his visit to it, which lasted but about two months, he wrote notes or minutes of what he saw. He promised to show me them, but I neglected to put him in mind of it; and the greatest part of them has been lost, or perhaps destroyed in a precipitate burning of his papers a few days before his death, which must ever be lamented: one small paper book, however, entitled "*France II.*," has been preserved, and is in my possession. It is a diurnal register of his life and observations from the 10th of October to the 4th of November, inclusive, being twenty-six days, and shows an extraordinary attention to various minute particulars. Being the only memorial of this tour that remains, my readers, I am confident, will peruse it with pleasure, though his notes are very short, and evidently written only to assist his own recollection.

"*Tuesday, Oct. 10.*—We saw the *école militaire*, in which 150 young boys are educated for the army. They have arms of different sizes, according to the age—flints of wood. The building is very large, but nothing fine except

¹ It is probable that the author's memory here deceived him, and that he was thinking of Stella's remark, that *Swift* could write finely upon a broomstick.—J. BOSWELL. Jun.

the council-room—The French have large squares in the windows. They make good iron palisades—Their meals are gross.

"We visited the Observatory, a large building of a great height. The upper stones of the parapet very large, but not cramped with iron—The flat on the top is very extensive; but on the insulated part there is no parapet—Though it was broad enough, I did not care to go upon it. Maps were printing in one of the rooms—We walked to a small convent of the fathers of the Oratory. In the reading-desk of the refectory lay the Lives of the Saints.

"*Wednesday, Oct. 11.*—We went to see *Hôtel de Chatlois*, a house not very large, but very elegant. One of the rooms was gilt to a degree that I never saw before. The upper part for servants and their masters was pretty.

"Thence we went to Mr. Monvil's, a house divided into small apartments, furnished with effeminate and minute elegance—Porphyry.

"Thence we went to St. Roque's church, which is very large. The lower part of the pillars incrustured with marble. Three chapels behind the high altar; the last a mass of low arches. Altars, I believe, all round.

"We passed through *Place de Vendôme*, a fine square, about as big as Hanover-square. Inhabited by the high families. Louis XIV. on horseback in the middle.

"Monville is the son of a farmer-general. In the house of *Chatlois* is a room furnished with Japan, fitted up in Europe.

"We dined with Bocage,¹ the Marquis Blanchetti, and his lady—The sweetmeats taken by the Marchioness Blanchetti, after observing that they were dear—Mr. Le Roy, Count Manucci, the abbé, the prior, and Father Wilson, who stayed with me till I took him home in the coach—Bathiani is gone.

"The French have no laws for the maintenance of their poor—Monk not necessarily a priest—Benedictines rise at four; are at church an hour and a half; at church again half an hour before, half an hour after, dinner; and again half an hour after seven to eight—They may sleep eight hours—Bodily labour wanted in monasteries—The poor taken into hospitals, and miserably kept—Monks in the convent fifteen: accounted poor.

"*Thursday, Oct. 12.*—We went to the Gobelins—Tapestry makes a good picture—Imitates flesh exactly—one piece with a gold ground—the birds not exactly coloured—Thence we went to the king's cabinet; very neat, not, perhaps, perfect—gold ore—candles of the candle-tree—seeds—woods—Thence to Gagnier's house, where I saw rooms nine, furnished with a profusion of wealth and elegance which I never had seen before—vases—pictures—the dragon china—The lustre is said to be of crystal, and to have cost 3,500*l.*—The whole furniture said to have cost 125,000*l.*—Damask hangings covered with pictures—Porphyry—This house struck me—Then we waited on the ladies to Monville's—Captain Irwin with us²—Spain—County towns all beggars—At Dijon he

¹ Madame Du Bocage. See *post*, p. 160.—C.

² The rest of this paragraph appears to be a minute of what was told by Captain Irwin.—B.

could not find the way to Orleans—Cross roads of France very bad—Five soldiers—Woman—Soldiers escaped—The colonel would not lose five men for the death of one woman—The magistrate cannot seize a soldier but by the colonel's permission—Good inn at Nismes—Moors of Barbary fond of Englishmen—Gibraltar eminently healthy; it has beef from Barbary—There is a large garden—Soldiers sometimes fall from the rock.'

"Friday, Oct. 13.—I stayed at home all day, only went to find the prior, who was not at home—I read something in Canus¹—*Nec admiror, nec multum laudo.*

"Saturday, Oct. 14.—We went to the house of M. [D']Argenson, which was almost wainscotted with looking-glasses, and covered with gold—The ladies' closet wainscotted with large squares of glass over painted paper—They always place mirrors to reflect their rooms.

"Then we went to Julien's,² the treasurer of the clergy—30,000*l.* a year—The house has no very large room, but is set with mirrors, and covered with gold—Books of wood here, and in another library.

"At D*****'s³ I looked into the books in the lady's closet, and in contempt showed them to Mr. T[hrale]—'Prince Titi';⁴ *Bibl. des Fées*, and other books—She was offended, and shut up, as we heard afterwards, her apartment.

"Then we went to Julien le Roy, the king's watchmaker, a man of character in his business, who showed a small clock made to find the longitude. A decent man.

"Afterwards we saw the *Palais Marchand* and the courts of justice, civil and criminal—Queries on the *Sellette*⁵—This building has the old Gothic passages, and a great appearance of antiquity. Three hundred prisoners sometimes in the gaol.

"Much disturbed; hope no ill will be."

"In the afternoon I visited Mr. Freron the journalist. He spoke Latin very scantily, but seemed to understand me. His house not splendid, but of commodious size. His family, wife, son, and daughter, not elevated, but decent. I was pleased with my reception. He is to translate my books, which I am to send him with notes.

¹ Melchior Canus, a celebrated Spanish Dominican, who died at Toledo, in 1560. He wrote a treatise on "*De Locis Theologicis*," in twelve books.—B.

² M. de St. Julien, Receveur-général du Clergé.—C.

³ D'Argenson's.—C.

⁴ The History of *Prince Titi* was said to be the *autobiography* of Frederick Prince of Wales, but was probably written by Ralph, his secretary. See Park's Roy. and Nob. Auth., vol. i. p. 171; and Biog. Dict., art. Ralph, where it is added, that Ralph's executor gave up the unpublished MS. of Prince Titi to Lord Bute.—C.

⁵ The *sellette* was a stool on which the criminal sat while he was interrogated by the court. This is what Johnson means by "queries."—C.

⁶ This passage, which so many think superstitious, reminds me of "*Archbishop Land's Diary*."—B.

"*Sunday, Oct. 15.*—At Choisi, a royal palace on the banks of the Seine, about 7 m. from Paris. The terrace noble along the river. The rooms numerous and grand, but not discriminated from other palaces. The chapel beautiful, but small—China globes—inlaid tables—labyrinth—sinking table—toilet tables.

"*Monday, Oct. 16.*—The Palais Royal very grand, large, and lofty—A very great collection of pictures—three of Raphael—two Holy Family—one small piece of M. Angelo—one room of Ruebens—I thought the pictures of Raphael fine.

"The Thuilleries—Statues: Venus—Æn. and Anchises in his arms—Nilus—many more—The walks not open to mean persons—Chairs at night hired for two sous a piece—Pont tournant.

"Austin Nuns—Grate—Mrs. Fermor, abbess—She knew Pope, and thought him disagreeable—Mrs. — has many books—has seen life—Their frontlet disagreeable—Their hood—Their life easy—Rise about five; hour and half in chapel—Dine at ten—another hour and half in chapel; half an hour about three, and half an hour more at seven—four hours in chapel—A large garden—Thirteen pensioners—Teachers complained.

"At the Boulevards saw nothing, yet was glad to be there—Rope dancing and farce—Egg dance—*N.B.* Near Paris, whether on week-days or Sundays, the roads empty.

"*Tuesday, Oct. 17.*—At the *Palais Marchand* I bought—

A snuff box,	.	.	.	.	24 <i>lives</i> .
—, —,	.	.	.	.	6
Table book,	.	.	.	.	15
Scissors 3 p [pair]	.	.	.	.	18

[*Lives*] 68—2l. 12s 6d. sterling.

"We heard the lawyers plead—*N.* As many killed at Paris as there are days in the year—*Chambre de question*—Tournelle at the Palais Marchand—An old venerable building.

"The Palais Bourbon, belonging to the Prince of Condé—Only one small wing shown—lofty—splendid—gold and glass—The battles of the great Condé are painted in one of the rooms—The present prince a grandsire at thirty-nine.¹

"The sight of palaces, and other great buildings, leaves no very distinct images, unless to those who talk of them—As I entered, my wife was in my mind;² she would have been pleased. Having now nobody to please, I am little pleased.

¹ The *grandson* was the celebrated and unfortunate Duke d'Enghien, born in 1775, murdered in 1804. The father, "restes infortunés du plus beau sang du monde," still lives under his former title of Duc de Bourbon. He died in August, 1830, under most melancholy circumstances.—O.

² His tender affection for his departed wife, of which there are many evidences in his "Prayers and Meditations," appears very feelingly in this passage.

"*N.B.* In France there is no middle rank.

"So many shops open, that Sunday is little distinguished at Paris—The palaces of Louvre and Thuilleries granted out in lodgings.

"In the *Palais de Bourbon*, gilt globes of metal at the fire-place.

"The French beds commended—Much of the marble only paste.

"The colosseum a mere wooden building, at least much of it.

"*Wednesday, Oct. 18.*—We went to Fontainebleau, which we found a large mean town, crowded with people—The forest thick with woods, very extensive—Manucci secured us lodgings—The appearance of the country pleasant—no hills, few streams, only one hedge—I remember no chapels nor crosses on the road—Pavement still, and rows of trees.

"*N.B.* Nobody but mean people walk in Paris.

"*Thursday, Oct. 19.*—At court we saw the apartments—The king's bed-chamber and council-chamber extremely splendid—Persons of all ranks in the external rooms through which the family passes—servants and masters—Brunet with us the second time.

"The introducer came to us—civil to me—Presenting I had scruples—Not necessary—We went and saw the king and queen at dinner—We saw the other ladies at dinner—Madame Elizabeth, with the Princess of Guimené—At night we went to a comedy—I neither saw nor heard—Drunken women—Mrs. T. preferred one to the other.

"*Friday, Oct. 20.*—We saw the queen mount in the forest—Brown habit; rode aside; one lady rode aside—The queen's horse light gray—martingale—She galloped—We then went to the apartments, and admired them—Then wandered through the palace—In the passages, stalls and shops—Painting in fresco by a great master, worn out—We saw the king's horses and dogs—The dogs almost all English—degenerate—The horses not much commended—The stables cool: the kennel filthy.

"At night the ladies went to the opera—I refused, but should have been welcome.

"The king fed himself with his left hand as we.

"*Saturday, Oct. 21.*—In the night I got round—We came home to Paris—I think we did not see the chapel—Tree broken by the wind—The French chairs made of all boards painted.

"*N.B.* Soldiers at the court of justice—Soldiers not amenable to the magistrates—Dijon women.

"Fagots in the palace—Everything slovenly, except in the chief rooms—Trees in the roads, some tall, none old, many very young and small.

"Women's saddles seem ill made—Queen's bridle woven with silver—Tags to strike the horse.

"*Sunday, Oct. 22.*—To Versailles, a mean town—Carriages of business passing—Mean shops against the wall—Our way lay through Sève, where the China manufacture—Wooden bridge at Sève, in the way to Versailles—The palace of great extent—The front long; I saw it not perfectly—The Mena-

gerie—Cygnets dark; their black feet; on the ground; tame—Halcyons, or gulls—Stag and hind, young—Aviary, very large; the net wire—Black stag of China, small—Rhinceros, the horn broken and pared away, which, I suppose, will grow; the basis, I think, four inches across; the skin folds like loose cloth doubled over his body, and across his hips; a vast animal, though young: as big, perhaps, as four oxen—The young elephant, with his tusks just appearing—The brown bear put out his paws—all very tame—The lion—The tigers I did not well view—The camel, or dromedary, with two bunches called the Huguin, taller than any horse—Two camels with one bunch—Among the birds was a pelican, who being let out, went to a fountain, and swam about to catch fish—his feet well webbed; he dipped his head, and turned his long bill sideways—he caught two or three fish, but did not eat them.

“Trianon is a kind of retreat appendant to Versailles—It has an open portico; the pavement, and, I think, the pillars, of marble—There are many rooms, which I do not distinctly remember—A table of porphyry, about five feet long, and between two and three broad, given to Louis XIV. by the Venetian state—In the council-room almost all that was not door or window was, I think, looking-glass—Little Trianon is a small palace like a gentleman's house—The upper floor paved with brick—Little Vienne—The court is ill paved—The rooms at the top are small, fit to soothe the imagination with privacy—In the front of Versailles are small basins of water on the terrace, and other basins, I think, below them—There are little courts—The great gallery is wainscotted with mirrors not very large, but joined by frames—I suppose the large plates were not yet made—The playhouse was very large¹—The chapel I do not remember if we saw—We saw one chapel, but I am not certain whether there or at Trianon—The foreign office paved with bricks [tiles]—The dinner half a louis each and, I think, a louis over—Money given at menagerie, three livres; at palace, six livres.

“*Monday, Oct. 23.*—Last night I wrote to Levet—We went to see the look ing-glasses wrought—They come from Normandy in cast plates, perhaps the third of an inch thick—At Paris they are ground upon a marble table, by rubbing one plate upon another with a grit between them—The various sands, of which there are said to be five, I could not learn—The handle by which the upper glass is moved, has the form of a wheel, which may be moved in all directions—The plates are sent up with their surfaces ground, but not polished, and so continue till they are bespoken, lest time should spoil the surface as we were told—Those that are to be polished are laid on a table covered with several thick cloths, hard strained, that the resistance may be equal; they are then rubbed with a hand rubber, held down hard by a contrivance which I did not well understand—The powder which is used last seemed to me to be

¹ When at Versailles the people showed us the theatre. As we stood on the stage, looking at some machinery for play-house purposes—“Now we are here, what shall we act, Dr. J. Anson? The Englishman at Paris?” “No, no,” replied he, “we will try to act Harry the First.”—PUGH.

iron dissolved in aquafortis; they called it, as Baretti said, *marc de l'eau forte*, which he thought was dregs—They mentioned vitriol and saltpetre—The cannon ball swam in the quicksilver—To silver them, a leaf of beaten tin is laid, and rubbed with quicksilver, to which it unites—Then more quicksilver is poured upon it, which, by its mutual [attraction] rises very high—Then a paper is laid at the nearest end of the plate, over which the glass is slid till it lies upon the plate, having driven much of the quicksilver before it—It is then, I think, pressed upon cloth, and then set sloping to drop the superfluous mercury: the slope is daily heightened towards a perpendicular.

“In the way I saw the Grève, the mayor's house, and the Bastille. We then went to Sans-terre, a brewer¹—He brews with about as much malt as Mr. Thrale, and sells his beer at the same price, though he pays no duty for malt, and little more than half as much for beer—Beer is sold retail at sixpence a bottle—He brews 4,000 barrels a year—There are seventeen brewers in Paris, of whom none is supposed to brew more than he—Reckoning them at 3,000 each, they make 51,000 a year—They make their malt, for malting is here no trade.

“The moat of the Bastille is dry.

“Tuesday, Oct. 24.—We visited the king's library—I saw the *Speculum Humanæ Salvationis*, rudely printed, with ink, sometimes pale, sometimes black; part supposed to be with wooden types, and part with pages cut in boards. The Bible, supposed to be older than that of Mentz, in 1462; it has no date; it is supposed to have been printed with wooden types—I am in doubt; the print is large and fair, in two folios—Another book was shown me, supposed to have been printed with wooden types—I think *Durandi Sanctorium* in 1458—This is inferred from the difference of form sometimes seen in the same letter, which might be struck with different puncheons—The regular similitude of most letters proves better that they are metal—I saw no thing but the *Speculum*, which I had not seen, I think, before.

“Thence to the Sorbonne—The library very large, not in lattices like the king's—*Marbone* and *Durandi*, q. collection 14 vol. *Scriptores de rebus Gallicis* many folios—*Histoire Généalogique of France*, 9 vol. *Gallia Christiana*, the first edition, 4to. the last, f. 12 vol. The prior and librarian dined with us—I waited on them home—Their garden pretty, with covered walks, but small; yet may hold many students—The doctors of the Sorbonne are all equal—choose those who succeed to vacancies—Profit little.

“Wednesday, Oct. 25.—I went with the prior to St. Cloud, to see Dr. Hooke²—We walked round the palace, and had some talk—I dined with our whole company at the monastery—In the library, *Beroald—Cymon—Titus* from Boccace—*Oratio Proverbialis* to the Virgin, from Petrarch; Falkland to Sandys—Dryden's Preface to the third vol. of Miscellanies.

¹ Santerre, the detestable ruffian who afterwards conducted Louis XVI. to the scaffold, and commanded the troops that guarded it during his murder.—M.

² Second son of Hooke the historian, a doctor of the Sorbonne.—C.

"*Thursday, Oct. 26.*—We saw the china at Sêve, cut, glazed, painted—Bellevue,¹ a pleasing house, not great; fine prospect—Meudon, an old palace—Alexander, in porphyry: hollow between eyes and nose, thin cheeks—Plato and Aristotle—Noble terrace overlooks the town—St. Cloud—Gallery not very high, nor grand, but pleasing—in the rooms, Michael Angelo, drawn by himself, Sir Thomas More, Des Cartes, Bochart, Nau læus, Mazarine—Gilded wainscot, so common that it is not minded—Gough and Keene—Hooke came to us at the inn—A message from Drumgould

"*Friday, Oct. 27.*—I staid at home—Gough and Keene, and Mrs. S——'s² friend dined with us—This day we began to have a fire—The weather is grown very cold, and I fear has a bad effect upon my breath, which has grown much more free and easy in this country.

"*Saturday, Oct. 28.*—I visited the Grand Chartreux,³ built by St. Louis—It is built for forty, but contains only twenty-four, and will not maintain more—The friar that spoke to us had a pretty apartment—Mr. Baretti says four rooms; I remember but three—His books seemed to be French—His garden was neat; he gave me grapes—We saw the Place de Victoire, with the statues of the king, and the captive nations.

"We saw the palace and gardens of Luxembourg, but the gallery was shut—We climbed to the top stairs—I dined with Colebrooke,⁴ who had much company—Foote, Sir George Rodney,⁵ Motteux, Udson, Taaf—called on the prior, and found him in bed.

"Hotel—a guinea a day—Coach, three guineas a week—Valet de place three l. a day—*Avantcoursur*, a guinea a week—Ordinary dinner, six l. a head—Our ordinary seems to be about five guineas a day—Our extraordinary expenses, as diversions, gratuities, clothes, I cannot reckon—Our travelling is ten guineas a day—White stockings,⁶ 18 l.—Wig—Hat.

"*Sunday, Oct. 29.*—We saw the boarding school—The *Enfans trouvés*—A room with about eighty-six children in cradles, as sweet as a parlour—They lose a third; take in to perhaps more than seven [years old]; put them to trades; pin to them the papers sent with them—Want nurses—Saw their chapel.

"Went to St. Eustatia;⁷ saw an innumerable company of girls catechised, in many bodies, perhaps 100 to a catechist—Boys taught at one time, girls at another—The sermon: the preacher wears a cap, which he takes off at *the name*—his action uniform, not very violent.

¹ At that period inhabited by the king's aunts.—O.

² Mrs. Strickland.

³ There was in France but one *Grand Chartreux*, the monastery near Grenoble founded by St. Bruno.—O.

⁴ Sir George Colebrooke.—O.

⁵ The celebrated Admiral, afterwards Lord Rodney.

⁶ That is, 18 *Weres*. Two pair of white silk stockings were probably purchased.—M.

⁷ The parish church of St. Eustache.—O.

"Monday, Oct. 30.—We saw the library of St. Germain¹—A very noble collection—*Codex Divinorum Officiorum*, 1459—a letter, square like that of the *Offices*, perhaps the same—The *Codex*, by Fust and Gernsheym—*Meursius*, 12 v. fol.—*Amadis*, in French, 3 vol. fol.—*CATHOLICON sine colophone*, but of 1460—Two other editions,² one by—*Augustin. de Civitate Dei*, without name, date, or place, but of Fust's square letter as it seems.

"I dined with Col. Drumgould; had a pleasing afternoon.

"Some of the books of St. Germain's stand in presses from the wall, like those at Oxford.

"Tuesday, Oct. 31.—I lived at the Benedictines; meagre day; soup meagre, herrings, eels, both with sauce; fried fish; lentils, tasteless in themselves—In the library; where I found *Maffeus's de Historia Indiæ: Promontorium flectere, to double the Cape*. I parted very tenderly from the prior and Friar Wilkes.

"*Maitre des Arts*, 2 y.—*Bacc. Theol.* 3 y.—*Licentiate*, 2 y.—*Doctor Th.* 2 y. in all 9 years—For the Doctorate three disputations, *Major*, *Minor*, *Sorbonica*—Several colleges suppressed, and transferred to that which was the Jesuit's College.

"Wednesday, Nov. 1.—We left Paris—St. Dennis, a large town: the church not very large, but the middle aisle is very lofty and awful. On the left are chapels built beyond the line of the wall, which destroyed the symmetry of the sides. The organ is higher above the pavement than I have ever seen. The gates are of brass. On the middle gate is the history of our Lord. The painted windows are historical, and said to be eminently beautiful—We were at another church belonging to a convent, of which the portal is a dome: we could not enter further, and it was almost dark.

"Thursday, Nov. 2.—We came this day to Chantilly, a seat belonging to the Prince of Condé. This place is eminently beautified by all varieties of waters starting up in fountains, falling in cascades, running in streams, and spread in lakes. The water seems to be too near the house. All this water is brought from a source or river three leagues off, by an artificial canal, which for one league is carried under ground—The house is magnificent—The cabinet seems well stocked: what I remember was, the jaws of a hippopotamus, and a young hippopotamus preserved, which, however, is so small, that I doubt its reality—It seems too hairy for an abortion, and too small for a mature birth—Nothing was [preserved] in spirits; all was dry—The dog; the deer; the ant-bear with long snout—The toucan, long broad beak—The stables were of very great

¹ St. Germain des Prés, the too celebrated *abbaye*.—O.

² I have looked in vain into De Bure, Meerman, Maittaire, and other typographical books, for the two editions of the "*Catholicon*" which Dr. Johnson mentions here, with names which I cannot make out. I read "one by *Latinius*, one by *Boedinius*." I have deposited the original MS. in the British Museum, where the curious may see it. My grateful acknowledgments are due to Mr. Planta for the trouble he was pleased to take in aiding my researches.

length—The kennel had no scents—There was a mockery of a village—The ménagerie had few animals¹—Two faussans,² or Brazilian weasels, spotted, very wild—There is a forest, and, I think, a park—I walked till I was very weary, and next morning felt my feet battered, and with pains in the toes.

"*Friday, Nov. 3.*—We came to Compiègne, a very large town, with a royal palace built round a pentagonal court—The court is raised upon vaults, and has, I suppose, an entry on one side by a gentle rise—Talk of painting—The church is not very large, but very elegant and splendid—I had at first great difficulty to walk, but motion grew continually easier—At night we came to Noyon, an episcopal city—The cathedral is very beautiful, the pillars alternately Gothic and Corinthian—We entered a very noble parochial church—Noyon is walled, and is said to be three miles round.

"*Saturday, Nov. 4.*—We rose very early, and came through St. Quintin to Cambray, not long after three—We went to an English nunnery, to give a letter to Father Welch, the confessor, who came to visit us in the evening.

"*Sunday, Nov. 5.*—We saw the cathedral—It is very beautiful, with chapels on each side. The choir splendid. The balustrade in one part brass. The *Neff* very high and grand. The altar silver as far as it is seen. The vestments very splendid—At the Benedictines' church"—

Here his Journal³ ends abruptly. Whether he wrote any more after this time, I know not; but probably not much, as he arrived in England about the 12th of November. These short notes of his tour, though they may seem minute taken singly, make together a considerable mass of information, and exhibit such an ardour of inquiry and acuteness of examination, as I believe, are found in but few travellers, especially at an advanced age. They completely refute the idle notion which has been propagated, *that he could not see*;⁴ and, if he had taken the trouble to revise and digest them,

¹ The writing is so bad here, that the names of several of the animals could not be deciphered without much more acquaintance with natural history than I possess. Dr. Blagden, with his usual politeness, most obligingly examined the MS. To that gentleman, and to Dr. Gray, of the British Museum, who also very readily assisted me, I beg leave to express my best thanks.

² It is thus written by Johnson, from the French pronunciation of *fossans*. It should be observed, that the person who showed this menagerie was mistaken in supposing the *fossans* and the Brazilian weasel to be the same, the *fossans* being a different animal, and a native of Madagascar. I find them, however, upon one plate in Pennant's "Synopsis of Quadrupeds."

³ My worthy and ingenious friend, Mr. Andrew Lumisden, by his accurate acquaintance with France, enabled me to make out many proper names which Dr. Johnson had written indistinctly, and sometimes spelt erroneously.

⁴ Miss Reynolds, who knew him longer, and saw him more constantly than Mr. Boswell, says, "Dr. Johnson's sight was so *very defective*, that he could scarcely distinguish the face

he undoubtedly could have expanded them into a very entertaining narrative.¹

When I met him in London the following year, the account which he gave me of his French tour, was, "Sir, I have seen all the visibilities of Paris, and around it : but to have formed an acquaintance with the people there would have required more time than I could stay. I was just beginning to creep into acquaintance by means of Colonel Drumgould, a very high man, Sir, head of *L'Ecole Militaire*, a most complete character, for he had first been a professor of rhetoric, and then became a soldier. And, Sir, I was very kindly treated by the English Benedictines, and have a cell appropriated to me in their convent."

He observed, "The great in France live very magnificently, but the rest very miserably. There is no happy middle state as in England. The shops of Paris are mean ; the meat in the markets is such as would be sent to a gaol in England ; and Mr. Thrale justly observed, that the cookery of the French was forced upon them by necessity ; for they could not eat their meat, unless they added some taste to it. The French are an indelicate people ; they

of his most intimate acquaintance at half a yard, and in general it was observable, that his critical remarks on *dress*, &c. were the result of *very close* inspection of the object, partly from curiosity, and partly from a desire of exciting admiration of his perspicuity, of which he was not a little ambitious."—*Recollections*.—C.

¹ "Mr. Thrale loved prospects, and was mortified that his friend could not enjoy the sight of those different dispositions of wood and water, hill and valley, that travelling through England and France affords a man. But when he wished to point them out to his companion, 'Never heed such nonsense,' would be the reply : 'a blade of grass is always a blade of grass, whether in one country or another. Let us, if we *do* talk, talk about something : men and women are my subjects of inquiry ; let us see how these differ from those we have left behind.' When we were at Rouen, he took a great fancy to the Abbé Roffette, with whom he conversed about the destruction of the order of Jesuits, and condemned it loudly, as a blow to the general power of the church, and likely to be followed with many and dangerous innovations which might at length become fatal to religion itself, and shake even the foundation of Christianity. The gentleman seemed to wonder and delight in his conversation : the talk was all in Latin, which both spoke fluently, and Dr. Johnson pronounced a long eulogium upon Milton with so much ardour, eloquence, and ingenuity, that the abbé rose from his seat and embraced him. My husband, seeing them apparently so charmed with the company of each other, politely invited the abbé to England, intending to oblige his friend ; who, instead of thanking, reprimanded him severely before the man, for such a sudden burst of tenderness towards a person he could know nothing at all of ; and thus put a sudden finish to all his own and Mr. Thrale's entertainment from the company of the Abbé Roffette. His dislike of the French was well known to both nations, I believe ; but he applauded the number of their books and the graces of their style. 'They have few sentiments,' said he, 'but they express them neatly ; they have little meat too, but they dress it well.'"—*Piozzi*.

will spit upon any place. At Madame [Du Bocage's,] a literary lady of rank, the footman took the sugar in his fingers, and threw it into my coffee. I was going to put it aside; but hearing it was made on purpose for me, I e'en tasted Tom's fingers. The same lady would needs make tea *à l'Angloise*. The spout of the teapot did not pour freely; she bade the footman blow into it. France is worse than Scotland in everything but climate. Nature has done more for the French; but they have done less for themselves than the Scotch have done."¹

It happened that Foote was at Paris at the same time with Dr. Johnson, and his description of my friend while there was abundantly ludicrous. He told me, that the French were quite astonished at his figure and manner, and at his dress, which he obstinately continued exactly as in London; ²—his brown clothes, black stockings, and plain shirt. He mentioned, that an Irish gentleman said to Johnson, "Sir, you have not seen the best French players." JOHNSON. "Players, Sir! I look on them as no better than creatures set upon tables and joint stools, to make faces and produce laughter, like dancing dogs." "But, Sir, you will allow that some players are better than others?" JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir some dogs dance better than others."³

¹ In a letter written a few days after his return from France, he says, "The French have a clear air and a fruitful soil; but their mode of common life is gross and incommodious, and disgusting. I am come home convinced that no improvement of general use is to be found among them."—M.

² Foote seems to have *embellished* a little in saying that Johnson did not alter his dress at Paris; as in his journal is a memorandum about white stockings, wig, and hat. In another place we are told that "during his travels in France he was furnished with a French-made wig of handsome construction."—BLAKEWAY. By a note in Johnson's diary (Hawkins's "Life," p. 517), it appears that he had laid out £30 in clothes for his French journey.—M.

³ JOHNSON. "The French, Sir, are a very silly people. They have no common life. Nothing but the two ends, beggary and nobility. Sir, they are made up in everything of two extremes. They have no common sense, they have no common manners, no common learning—gross ignorance, or *les belles lettres*." A LADY [Mrs. Thrale]. "Indeed, even in their dress—their frippery finery, and their beggarly coarse linen. They had, I thought, no politeness; their civilities never indicated more good will than the talk of a parrot, indiscriminately using the same set of superlative phrases, '*à la merveille*!' to every one alike. They really seemed to have no expressions for sincerity and truth." JOHNSON. "They are much behind-hand, stupid, ignorant creatures. At Fontainebleau I saw a horse-race—everything was wrong; the heaviest weight was put upon the weakest horse, and all the jockeys wore the same colour coat." A GENTLEMAN. "Had you any acquaintance in Paris?" JOHNSON. "No I did not stay long enough to make any. I spoke only in Latin, and I could not have much conversation. There is no good in letting the French have a superiority over you every word

While Johnson was in France, he was generally very resolute in speaking Latin. It was a maxim with him that a man should not let himself down by speaking a language which he speaks imperfectly. Indeed, we must have often observed how inferior, how much like a child a man appears, who speaks a broken tongue. When Sir Joshua Reynolds, at one of the dinners of the royal academy, presented him to a Frenchman of great distinction, he would not deign to speak French, but talked Latin, though his excellency did not understand it, owing, perhaps, to Johnson's English pronunciation: yet upon another occasion he was observed to speak French to a Frenchman of high rank, who spoke English; and being asked the reason, with some expression of surprise, he answered, "because I think my French is as good as his English." Though Johnson understood French perfectly, he could not speak it readily, as I have observed at his first interview with General Paoli, in 1769; yet he wrote it, I imagine, pretty well, as appears from some of his letters in Mrs. Piozzi's collection, of which I shall transcribe one:

LETTER 226.

A MADAME LA COMTESSE DE —

May 16, 1771.

"Oui, madame, le moment est arrivé, et il faut que je parte. Mais pourquoi faut-il partir? Est-ce que je m'ennuye? Je m'ennuierai ailleurs. Est-ce que je cherche ou quelque plaisir, ou quelque soulagement? Je ne cherche rien, je n'espère rien. Aller voir ce que j'ai vû, être un peu rejoui, un peu degouté, me ressouvenir que la vie se passe, et qu'elle se passe en vain, me plaindre de moi, m'endurcir aux dehors; voici le tout de ce qu'on compte pour les delices de l'annee. Que Dieu vous donne, madame, tous les agrémens de la vie, avec un esprit qui peut en jouir sans s'y livrer trop."

Here let me not forget a curious anecdote, as related to me by

you speak."—On telling Mr. Barettil of the proof that Johnson gave of the stupidity of the French in the management of their horse-races,—that all the jockeys wore the same colour coat, &c., he said that was "like Johnson's remarks—he could not see."—But it was observed that he could inquire:—"yes," and it was by the answers he received that he was misled, for he asked, what did the first jockey wear? answer, green; what the second? green; what the third, green, which was true; but, then, the greens were all different greens, and very easily distinguished.—Johnson was perpetually making mistakes; so, on going to Fontainebleau, when we were about three fourths of the way, he exclaimed with amazement, that now we were between Paris and the King of France's court, and yet we had not met one carriage coming from thence, or even one going thither! On which all the company in the coach burst out a laughing, and immediately cried out, "Look, look, there is a coach gone by, there is a chariot, there is a postchaise!" I dare say we saw a hundred carriages, at least, that were going to or coming from Fontainebleau.—*Miss Reynolds's Recollections.*—O.

Mr. Beauclerk, which I shall endeavour to exhibit as well as I can in that gentleman's lively manner ; and in justice to him it is proper to add, that Dr. Johnson told me I might rely both on the correctness of his memory, and the fidelity of his narrative. "When Madame de Boufflers¹ was first in England," said Beauclerk, "she was desirous to see Johnson. I accordingly went with her to his chambers in the Temple, where she was entertained with his conversation for some time. When our visit was over, she and I left him, and were got into Inner Temple Lane, when all at once I heard a voice like thunder. This was occasioned by Johnson, who, it seems, upon a little reflection, had taken it into his head that he ought to have done the honours of his literary residence to a foreign lady of quality, and, eager to show himself a man of gallantry, was hurrying down the staircase in violent agitation. He overtook us before we reached the Temple-gate, and, brushing in between me and Madame de Boufflers, seized her hand, and conducted her to her coach. His dress was a rusty brown morning suit, a pair of old shoes by way of slippers, a little shrivelled wig sticking on the top of his head, and the sleeves of his shirt and the knees of his breeches hanging loose. A considerable crowd of people gathered round, and were not a little struck by his singular appearance."

He spoke Latin with wonderful fluency and elegance. When Père Boscovich² was in England, Johnson dined in company with him at Sir Joshua Reynolds's, and at Dr. Douglas's, now Bishop of Salisbury. Upon both occasions that celebrated foreigner expressed his astonishment at Johnson's Latin conversation.³ When

¹ La Comtesse de Boufflers was the mistress of the Prince of Conti, and aspired to be his wife. She was a bel-esprit, and in that character thought it necessary to be an *Anglomane*, and to visit England ; which she did in 1768.—C.

² Boscovich was a jesuit, born at Ragusa in 1711, who first introduced the Newtonian philosophy into Italy. He visited London in 1760, and was there elected into the Royal Society. He died in 1787.—C.

³ Boscovich had a ready current flow of that flimsy phraseology with which a priest may travel through Italy, Spain, and Germany. Johnson scorned what he called colloquial barbarisms. It was his pride to speak his best. He went on, after a little practice, with as much facility as if it was his native tongue. One sentence I remember. Observing that Fontenelle at first opposed the Newtonian philosophy, and embraced it afterwards, h's words were : *Fontinellus, nē fallor, in extremā senectute, fuit transfuga ad castra Newtoniana* —MURPHY.

at Paris, Johnson thus characterised Voltaire to Freron the journalist : "*Vir est acerrimi ingenii et paucarum literarum.*"

LETTER 227.

TO DR JOHNSON.

"Edinburgh, Dec. 5, 1775.

"MY DEAR SIR,—Mr. Alexander Maclean, the young laird of Col, being to set out to-morrow for London, I give him this letter to introduce him to your acquaintance. The kindness which you and I experienced from his brother, whose unfortunate death we sincerely lament, will make us always desirous to show attention to any branch of the family. Indeed, you have so much of the true Highland cordiality, that I am sure you would have thought me to blame if I had neglected to recommend to you this Hebridean prince, in whose island we were hospitably entertained. I ever am, with respectful attachment, my dear Sir, your most obliged and most humble servant,

"JAMES BOSWELL."

Mr. Maclean returned with the most agreeable accounts of the polite attention with which he was received by Dr. Johnson.

In the course of the year Dr. Burney informs me that "he very frequently met Dr. Johnson at Mr. Thrale's, at Streatham, where they had many long conversations, often sitting up as long as the fire and candles lasted and much longer than the patience of the servants subsisted." A few of Johnson's sayings, which that gentleman recollects, shall here be inserted.

"I never take a nap after dinner but when I have had a bad night, and then the nap takes me."

"The writer of an epitaph should not be considered as saying nothing but what is strictly true. Allowance must be made for some degree of exaggerated praise. In lapidary inscriptions a man is not upon oath."

"There is now less flogging in our great schools than formerly, but then less is learned there; so that what the boys get at one end they lose at the other."

"More is learned in public than in private schools, from emulation; there is the collision of mind with mind, or the radiation of many minds pointing to one centre. Though few boys make their own exercises, yet if a good exercise is given up, out of a great number of boys, it is made by somebody."

"I hate by-reads in education. Education is as well known, and has long been as well known as ever it can be. Endeavouring to make children prematurely wise is useless labour. Suppose they have more knowledge at five or six years old than other children, what use can be made of it? It will be

lost before it is wanted, and the waste of so much time and labour of the teacher can never be repaid. Too much is expected from precocity, and too little performed. Miss ——¹ was an instance of early cultivation, but in what did it terminate? In marrying a little presbyterian parson, who keeps an infant boarding-school, so that all her employment now is,

‘To suckle fools, and chronicle small beer.’

She tells the children, ‘This is a cat, and that is a dog, with four legs, and a tail: see there! you are much better than a cat or a dog, for you can speak.’ If I had bestowed such an education on a daughter, and had discovered that the thought of marrying such a fellow, I would have sent her to the *Congress*.”

“After having talked slightly of music, he was observed to listen very attentively while Miss Thrale played on the harpsicord; and with eagerness he called to her, ‘Why don’t you dash away like Burney?’ Dr. Burney upon this said to him, ‘I believe, Sir, we shall make a musician of you at last.’ Johnson with candid complacency replied, ‘Sir, I shall be glad to have a new sense given to me.’”

“He had come down one morning to the breakfast-room, and been a considerable time by himself before anybody appeared. When on a subsequent day he was twitted by Mrs. Thrale for being very late, which he generally was, he defended himself by alluding to the extraordinary morning, when he had been too early. ‘Madam, I do not like to come down to *vacuity*.’”

“Dr. Burney having remarked that Mr. Garrick was beginning to look old, he said, ‘Why, Sir, you are not to wonder at that; no man’s face has had more wear and tear.’”

LETTER 228.

TO MRS. MONTAGU.²

“Dec. 15, 1775.

“MADAM,—Having, after my return from a little ramble to France, passed some time in the country, I did not hear, till I was told by Miss Reynolds, that you were in town; and when I did hear it, I heard likewise that you were ill. To have you detained among us by sickness is to enjoy your presence at too dear a rate. I suffer myself to be flattered with hope that only half the intelligence is now true, and that you are now so well as to be able to leave us, and so kind as not to be willing. I am, Madam, your most humble servant,

“SAM. JOHNSON.”

¹ Miss Letitia Alken, who married Mr. Barbauld, and published “Easy Lessons for Children, &c. &c.”—C.

² Mrs. Montagu’s recent kindness to Miss Williams was not lost on Johnson. His letters to that lady became more elaborately respectful, and his subsequent mention of her took, as we shall see, a high tone of panegyris.—C.

LETTER 229.

TO MRS. MONTAGU.

"Dec. 17, 1775.

"MADAM,—All that the esteem and reverence of mankind can give you has been long in your possession, and the little that I can add to the voice of nations will not much exalt; of that little, however, you are, I hope, very certain.—I wonder, Madam, if you remember *Col* in the Hebrides? The brother and heir of poor *Col* has just been to visit me, and I have engaged to dine with him on Thursday. I do not know his lodging, and cannot send him a message, and must therefore suspend the honour which you are pleased to offer to, Madam, your most humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 230.

TO MRS. MONTAGU.

Thursday, Dec. 21, 1775.

"MADAM,—I know not when any letter has given me so much pleasure or vexation as that which I had yesterday the honour of receiving. That you, Madam, should wish for my company is surely a sufficient reason for being pleased;—that I should delay twice, what I had so little right to expect even once, has so bad an appearance, that I can only hope to have it thought that I am ashamed.—You have kindly allowed me to name a day. Will you be pleased, Madam, to accept of me any day after Tuesday? Till I am favoured with your answer, or despair of so much condescension, I shall suffer no engagement to fasten itself upon me.—I am, Madam, your most obliged and most humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

Not having heard from him for a longer time than I supposed he would be silent, I wrote to him Dec. 18, not in good spirits :

"Sometimes I have been afraid that the cold which has gone over Europe this year like a sort of pestilence has seized you severely: sometimes my imagination which is upon occasions prolific of evil, hath figured that you may have somehow taken offence at some part of my conduct."

LETTER 231.

TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"Dec. 23, 1775.

"DEAR SIR,—Never dream of any offence. How should you offend me? I consider your friendship as a possession, which I intend to hold till you take it from me, and to lament if ever by my fault I should lose it. However, when such suspicions find their way into your mind, always give them vent; I shall make haste to disperse them; but hinder their first ingress if you can. Consider such thoughts as morbid.

"Such illness as may excuse my omission to Lord Hailes I cannot honestly plead. I have been hindered, I know not how, by a succession of petty obstructions. I hope to mend immediately, and to send next post to his lord-

ship. Mr. Thrale would have written to you if I had omitted ; he sends his compliments, and wishes to see you.

"You and your lady will now have no more wrangling about feudal inheritance. How does the young Laird of Auchinleck ? I suppose Miss Veronica is grown a reader and discourser. I have just now got a cough, but it has never yet hindered me from sleeping ; I have had quieter nights than are common with me. I cannot but rejoice that Joseph ¹ has had the wit to find the way back. He is a fine fellow, and one of the best travellers in the world.

"Young Col brought me your letter. He is a very pleasing youth. I took him two days ago to the Mitre, and we dined together. I was as civil as I had the means of being. I have had a letter from *Rasay*, acknowledging, with great appearance of satisfaction, the insertion in the Edinburgh paper. I am very glad that it was done.

"My compliments to Mrs. Boswell, who does not love me ; and of all the rest, I need only send them to those that do ; and I am afraid it will give you very little trouble to distribute them—I am, my dear, dear Sir, &c.

"SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 232.

TO MR. GRANGER.²

(About 1775, but has no date).

"SIR,—When I returned from the country I found your letter ; and would very gladly have done what you desire, had it been in my power. Mr. Farmer is, I am confident, mistaken in supposing that he gave me any such pamphlet or cut. I should as soon have suspected myself, as Mr. Farmer, of forgetfulness ; but that I do not know, except from your letter, the name of Arthur O'Toole, nor recollect that I ever heard of it before. I think it impossible that I should have suffered such a total obliteration from my mind of anything which was ever there. This at least is certain ; that I do not know of any such pamphlet ; and equally certain I desire you to think it, that if I had it, you should immediately receive it from, Sir, your most humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

¹ Joseph Ritter, a Bohemian, who was in my service many years, and attended Dr. Johnson and me in our tour to the Hebrides. After having left me for some time, he had now returned to me.

² Author of the "Biographical History of England."—O.

CHAPTER VIII.

1776.

Law of Entail—Boswell's Melancholy—John Wesley—Clarendon Press—Booksellers' Profits—Bolt Court—Mrs. Thrale's Birth-day—Entails—Smith's "Wealth of Nations"—Lawyers and Lawsuits—Scotch Militia Bill—Obligation in settling Estates—"Johnsoniana"—Value of Truth—Monastic Orders—Carthusians—Religious Austerities—Wine-bibbing—Fasting—Influence of Education—Arithmetic—Sea Life.

IN 1776, Johnson wrote, so far as I can discover, nothing for the public : but that his mind was still ardent, and fraught with generous wishes to attain to still higher degrees of literary excellence, is proved by his private notes of this year, which I shall insert in their proper place.

LETTER 233.

TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"Jan. 10, 1776.

"DEAR SIR,—I have at last sent you all Lord Hailes's papers. While I was in France, I looked very often into Henault ; but Lord Hailes, in my opinion, leaves him far and far behind. Why I did not despatch so short a perusal sooner, when I look back, I am utterly unable to discover ; but human moments are stolen away by a thousand petty impediments which leave no trace behind them. I have been afflicted, through the whole Christmas, with the general disorder, of which the worst effect was a cough, which is now much mitigated, though the country, on which I look from a window at Streatham, is now covered with a deep snow. Mrs. Williams is very ill : everybody else is as usual.

"Among the papers I found a letter to you, which I think you had not opened ; and a paper for 'The Chronicle,' which I suppose it not necessary now to insert. I return them both. I have, within these few days, had the honour of receiving Lord Hailes's first volume, for which I return my most respectful thanks.

"I wish you, my dearest friend, and your haughty lady, (for I know she does not love me), and the young ladies, and the young laird, all happiness. Teach the young gentleman, in spite of his mamma, to think and speak well of, Sir, your affectionate humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

At this time was in agitation a matter of great consequence to me and my family, which I should not obtrude upon the world, were

it not that the part which Dr. Johnson's friendship for me made him take in it was the occasion of an exertion of his abilities, which it would be injustice to conceal. That what he wrote upon the subject may be understood, it is necessary to give a state of the question, which I shall do as briefly as I can.

In the year 1504, the barony or manor of Auchinleck (pronounced *Affléck*) in Ayrshire, which belonged to a family of the same name with the lands, having fallen to the crown by forfeiture, James the Fourth, King of Scotland, granted it to Thomas Boswell, a branch of an ancient family in the county of Fife, styling him in the charter, "*dilecto familiari nostro*," and assigning as the cause of the grant, "*pro bono et fidei servitio nobis præstito*." Thomas Boswell was slain in battle, fighting along with his sovereign, at the fatal field of Flodden, in 1513.

From this very honourable founder of our family, the estate was transmitted, in a direct series of heirs-male, to David Boswell, my father's great-grand-uncle, who had no sons, but four daughters, who were all respectably married, the eldest to Lord Cathcart.

David Boswell, being resolute in the military feudal principle of continuing the male succession, passed by his daughters, and settled the estate on his nephew by his next brother, who approved of the deed, and renounced any pretensions which he might possibly have, in preference to his son. But the estate having been burthened with large portions to the daughters, and other debts, it was necessary for the nephew to sell a considerable part of it, and what remained was still much encumbered.

The frugality of the nephew preserved, and, in some degree, relieved the estate. His son, my grandfather, an eminent lawyer, not only re-purchased a great part of what had been sold, but acquired other lands; and my father, who was one of the judges of Scotland, and had added considerably to the estate, now signified his inclination to take the privilege allowed by our law,¹ to secure it to his family in perpetuity by an entail, which, on account of his marriage articles, could not be done without my consent.

In the plan of entailing the estate, I heartily concurred with him,

¹ Acts of Parliament of Scotland, 1665, cap. 22.

though I was the first to be restrained by it ; but we unhappily differed as to the series of heirs which should be established, or, in the language of our law, called to the succession. My father had declared a predilection for heirs-general, that is, males and females indiscriminately. He was willing, however, that all males descending from his grandfather should be preferred to females ; but would not extend that privilege to males deriving their descent from a higher source. I, on the other hand, had a zealous partiality for heirs-male, however remote, which I maintained by arguments, which appeared to me to have considerable weight.¹ And in the particular case of our family, I apprehended that we were under an implied obligation, in honour and good faith, to transmit the estate by the same tenure by which he held it, which was as heirs-male, excluding nearer females. I therefore, as I thought conscientiously, objected to my father's scheme.

My opposition was very displeasing to my father, who was entitled to great respect and deference; and I had reason to apprehend disagreeable consequences from my non-compliance with his wishes. After much perplexity and uneasiness, I wrote to Dr. Johnson, stating the case, with all its difficulties, at full length, and earnestly

¹ As first, the opinion of some distinguished naturalists, that our species is transmitted through males only, the female being all along no more than a *nidus*, or nurse, as Mother Earth is to plants of every sort ; which notion seems to be confirmed by that text of Scripture, "He was yet *in the loins of his FATHER* when Melchisedeck met him," (Heb. vii. 10): and consequently, that a man's grandson by a daughter, instead of being his *surest* descendant, as is vulgarly said, has, in reality, no connection whatever with his blood. And, secondly, independent of this theory (which, if true, should completely exclude heirs-general), that if the preference of a male to a female, without regard to primogeniture (as a son, though much younger, nay even a grandson by a son, to a daughter), be once admitted, as it universally is, it must be equally reasonable and proper in the most remote degree of descent from an original proprietor of an estate, as in the nearest ; because, however distant from the representative at the time, that remote heir-male, upon the failure of those nearer to the *original proprietor* than he is, becomes in fact the nearest male to *him*, and is, therefore, preferable as *his* representative, to a female descendant. A little extension of mind will enable us easily to perceive that a son's son, in continuation to whatever length of time, is preferable to a son's daughter, in the succession to an ancient inheritance ; in which regard should be had to the representation of the original proprietor, and not to that of one of his descendants. I am aware of Blackstone's admirable demonstration of the reasonableness of the legal succession, upon the principle of there being the greatest probability that the nearest heir of the person who last dies proprietor of an estate is of the blood of the first purchaser. But supposing a pedigree to be carefully authenticated through all its branches, instead of mere *probability* there will be a *certainly* that the nearest heir-male, at *whatever period*, has the same right of blood with the first heir-male, namely, *the original purchaser's eldest son*.

requesting that he would consider it at leisure, and favour me with his friendly opinion and advice.

LETTER 234.

TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"London, Jan. 15, 1776.

"DEAR SIR,—I was much impressed by your letter, and if I can form upon your case any resolution satisfactory to myself, will very gladly impart it: but whether I am equal to it, I do not know. It is a case compounded of law and justice, and requires a mind versed in juridical disquisitions. Could not you tell your whole mind to Lord Hailes? He is, you know, both a Christian and a lawyer. I suppose he is above partiality, and above loquacity; and, I believe, he will not think the time lost in which he may quiet a disturbed, or settle a wavering mind. Write to me as anything occurs to you; and if I find myself stopped by want of facts necessary to be known, I will make inquiries of you as my doubts arise.

"If your former resolutions should be found only fanciful, you decide rightly in judging that your father's fancies may claim the preference; but whether they are fanciful or rational is the question. I really think Lord Hailes could help us.

"Make my compliments to dear Mrs. Boswell; and tell her, that I hope to be wanting in nothing that I can contribute to bring you all out of your troubles. I am, dear Sir, most affectionately,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 235.

TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"Feb. 8, 1776.

"DEAR SIR,—I am going to write upon a question which requires more knowledge of local law, and more acquaintance with the general rules of inheritance, than I can claim; but I write, because you request it.

"Land is, like any other possession, by natural right wholly in the power of its present owner; and may be sold, given, or bequeathed, absolutely or conditionally, as judgment shall direct or passion incite.

"But natural right would avail little without the protection of law; and the primary notion of law is restraint in the exercise of natural right. A man is therefore in society not fully master of what he calls his own, but he still retains all the power which law does not take from him.

"In the exercise of the right which law either leaves or gives, regard is to be paid to moral obligations.

"Of the estate which we are now considering, your father still retains such possession, with such power over it, that he can sell it, and do with the money what he will, without any legal impediment. But when he extends his power beyond his own life, by settling the order of succession, the law makes your consent necessary.

"Let us suppose that he sells the land to risk the money in some specious

adventure, and in that adventure loses the whole ; his posterity would be disappointed ; but they could not think themselves injured or robbed. If he spent it upon vice or pleasure, his successors could only call him vicious and voluptuous ; they could not say that he was injurious or unjust.

"He that may do more may do less. He that by selling or squandering may disinherit a whole family, may certainly disinherit part by a partial settlement.

"Laws are formed by the manners and exigencies of particular times, and it is but accidental that they last longer than their causes: the limitation of feudal succession to the male arose from the obligation of the tenant to attend his chief in war.

"As times and opinions are always changing, I know not whether it be not usurpation to prescribe rules to posterity, by presuming to judge of what we cannot know ; and I know not whether I fully approve either your design or your father's, to limit that succession which descended to you unlimited. If we are to leave *sartum tectum* to posterity, what we have without any merit of our own received from our ancestors, should not choice and free-will be kept unviolated ? Is land to be treated with more reverence than liberty ? If this consideration should restrain your father from disinheriting some of the males, does it leave you the power of disinheriting all the females ?

"Can the possessor of a feudal estate make any will ? Can he appoint, out of the inheritance, any portion to his daughters ? There seems to be a very shadowy difference between the power of leaving land, and of leaving money to be raised from land ; between leaving an estate to females, and leaving the male heir, in effect, only their steward.

"Suppose at one time a law that allowed only males to inherit, and during the continuance of this law, many estates to have descended, passing by the females, to remoter heirs. Suppose afterwards the law repealed in correspondence with a change of manners, and women made capable of inheritance ; would not then the tenure of estates be changed ? Could the women have no benefit from a law made in their favour ? Must they be passed by upon moral principles for ever, because they were once excluded by a legal prohibition ? Or may that which passed only to males by one law, pass likewise to females by another ?

"You mention your resolution to maintain the right of your brothers :¹ I do not see how any of their rights are invaded.

"As your whole difficulty arises from the act of your ancestor, who diverted the succession from the females, you inquire, very properly, what were his motives, and what was his intention : for you certainly are not bound by his act more than he intended to bind you, nor hold your land on harder or stricter terms than those on which it was granted.

"Intentions must be gathered from acts. When he left the estate to his

¹ Which term I applied to all the heirs male.

nephew, by excluding his daughters, was it, or was it not in his power to have perpetuated the succession to the males ? If he could have done it, he seems to have shown, by omitting it, that he did not desire it to be done, and, upon your own principles, you will not easily prove your right to destroy that capacity of succession which your ancestors have left.

“If your ancestor had not the power of making a perpetual settlement : and if, therefore, we cannot judge distinctly of his intentions, yet his act can only be considered as an example ; it makes not an obligation. And, as you observe, he set no example of rigorous adherence to the line of succession. He that overlooked a brother, would not wonder that little regard is shown to remote relations.

“As the rules of succession are, in a great part, purely legal, no man can be supposed to bequeath anything, but upon legal terms ; he can grant no power which the law denies ; and if he makes no special and definite limitation, he confers all the power which the law allows.

“Your ancestor, for some reason, disinherited his daughters ; but it no more follows that he intended this act as a rule for posterity, than the disinheriting of his brother. If, therefore, you ask by what right your father admits daughters to inheritance, ask yourself, first, by what right you require them to be excluded ? It appears, upon reflection, that your father excludes nobody ; he only admits near females to inherit before males more remote ; and the exclusion is purely consequential.

“These, dear Sir, are my thoughts, immethodical and deliberative ; but, perhaps, you may find in them some glimmering of evidence. I cannot, however, but again recommend to you a conference with Lord Hailes, whom you know to be both a lawyer and a Christian. Make my compliments to Mrs. Boswell, though she does not love me. I am, Sir, your affectionate servant,

“SAM. JOHNSON.”

I had followed his recommendation and consulted Lord Hailes, who upon this subject had a firm opinion contrary to mine. His lordship obligingly took the trouble to write me a letter, in which he discussed with legal and historical learning, the points in which I saw much difficulty, maintaining that “the succession of heirs-general was the succession, by the law of Scotland, from the throne to the cottage, as far as we can learn it by record ;” observing that the estate of our family had not been limited to heirs-male ; and that though an heir-male had in one instance been chosen in preference to nearer females, that had been an arbitrary act, which had seemed to be best in the embarrassed state of affairs at that time : and the fact was, that upon a fair computation of the value of land and

money at the time, applied to the estate and the burthens upon it, there was nothing given the heirs-male but the skeleton of an estate. "The plea of conscience," said his lordship, "which you put, is a most respectable one, especially when *conscience* and *self* are on different sides. But I think that conscience is not well informed, and that *self* and *she* ought on this occasion to be of a side."

This letter, which had considerable influence upon my mind, I sent to Dr. Johnson, begging to hear from him again upon this interesting question.

LETTER 236.

TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"Feb. 9, 1776.

"DEAR SIR,—Having not any acquaintance with the laws or customs of Scotland, I endeavoured to consider your question upon general principles, and found nothing of much validity that I could oppose to this position: 'He who inherits a fief unlimited by his ancestors, inherits the power of limiting it according to his own judgment or opinion.' If this be true, you may join with your father.

"Further consideration produces another conclusion. 'He who receives a fief unlimited by his ancestors, gives his heirs some reason to complain if he does not transmit it unlimited to posterity. For why should he make the state of others worse than his own, without a reason?' If this be true, though neither you nor your father are about to do what is quite right, but as your father violates (I think) the legal succession least, he seems to be nearer the right than yourself.

"It cannot but occur that 'Women have natural and equitable claims as well as men, and these claims are not to be capriciously or lightly superseded or infringed.' When fiefs implied military service, it is easily discerned why females could not inherit them: but that reason is now at an end. As manners make laws, manners likewise repeal them.

"These are the general conclusions which I have attained. None of them are very favourable to your scheme of entail, nor perhaps to any scheme. My observation, that only he who acquires an estate may bequeath it capriciously, if it contains any conviction, includes this position likewise, that only he who acquires an estate may entail it capriciously. But I think it may be safely presumed, that 'He who inherits an estate, inherits all the power legally concomitant;' and that 'He who gives or leaves unlimited an estate legally limitable, must be presumed to give that power of limitation, which he omitted to take away, and to commit future contingencies to future prudence.' In these two positions I believe Lord Hailes will advise you to rest; every other notion of possession seems to me full of difficulties, and embarrassed with scruples.

"If these axioms be allowed, you have arrived now at full liberty without the help of particular circumstances, which, however, have in your case great

weight. You very rightly observe, that he who passing by his brother gave the inheritance to his nephew, could limit no more than he gave; and by Lord Hailes's estimate of fourteen years' purchase, what he gave was no more than you may easily entail according to your own opinion, if that opinion should finally prevail.

"Lord Hailes's suspicion that entails are encroachments on the dominion of Providence, may be extended to all hereditary privileges and all permanent institutions; I do not see why it may not be extended to any provision for the present hour, since all care about futurity proceeds upon a supposition, that we know at least in some degree what will be future. Of the future we certainly know nothing; but we may form conjectures from the past; and the power of forming conjectures includes, in my opinion, the duty of acting in conformity to that probability, which we discover. Providence gives the power, of which reason teaches the use. I am, dear Sir, your most faithful servant.

"SAM. JOHNSON.

"I hope I shall get some ground now with Mrs. Boswell: make my compliments to her, and to the little people. Don't burn papers; they may be safe enough in your own box; you will wish to see them hereafter."

LETTER 237.

TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"Feb. 15, 1776.

"DEAR SIR,—To the letters which I have written about your great question I have nothing to add. If your conscience is satisfied, you have now only your prudence to consult. I long for a letter, that I may know how this troublesome and vexatious question is at last decided.¹ I hope that it will at last end well. Lord Hailes's letter was very friendly, and very seasonable, but I think his aversion from entails has something in it like superstition. Providence is not counteracted by any means which Providence puts into our power. The continuance and propagation of families makes a great part of the Jewish law, and is by no means prohibited in the Christian institution, though the necessity of it continues no longer. Hereditary tenures are established in all civilised countries, and are accompanied in most with hereditary authority. Sir William Temple considers our constitution as defective, that there is not an unalienable estate in land connected with a peerage: and Lord Bacon mentions as a proof that the Turks are barbarians, their want of *stirpes*, as he calls them, or hereditary rank. Do not let your mind, when it is freed from the

¹ The entail framed by my father with various judicious clauses was settled by him and me, settling the estate upon the heirs male of his grandfather, which I found had been already done by my grandfather, imperfectly, but so as to be defeated only by selling the land. I was freed by Dr. Johnson from scruples of conscientious obligation, and could, therefore, gratify my father. But my opinion and partiality for male succession, in its full extent, remained unshaken. Yet let me not be thought harsh or unkind to daughters: for my notion is, that they should be treated with great affection and tenderness, and always participate of the prosperity of the family.

supposed necessity of a rigorous entail, be entangled with contrary objections, and think all entails unlawful, till you have cogent arguments, which I believe you will never find. I am afraid of scruples.

"I have now sent all Lord Hailes's papers; part I had found hidden in a drawer in which I had laid them for security and had forgotten them. Part of these are written twice: I have returned both the copies. Part I had read before. Be so kind as to return Lord Hailes my most respectful thanks for his first volume: his accuracy strikes me with wonder; his narrative is far superior to that of Henault, as I have formerly mentioned. I am afraid that the trouble which my irregularity and delay has cost him is greater, far greater, than any good that I can do him will ever recompense; but if I have any more copy, I will try to do better.

"Pray let me know if Mrs. Boswell is friends with me, and pay my respects to Veronica, and Euphemia, and Alexander. I am, Sir, your most humble servant,
"SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 238.

FROM MR. BOSWELL.

"Edinburg, Feb. 20, 1776.

"You have illuminated my mind, and relieved me from imaginary shackles of conscientious obligation. Were it necessary, I could immediately join in an entail upon the series of heirs approved by my father; but it is better no to act too suddenly."

LETTER 239.

TO MR. BOSWELL.

"Feb. 24, 1776.

"DEAR SIR,—I am glad that what I could think to say has at all contributed to quiet your thoughts. Your resolution not to act till your opinion is confirmed by more deliberation, is very just. If you have been scrupulous, do not be rash. I hope that, as you think more, and take opportunities of talking with men intelligent in questions of property, you will be able to free yourself from every difficulty. When I wrote last, I sent, I think, ten packets. Did you receive them all?

"You must tell Mrs. Boswell that I suspected her to have written without your knowledge,¹ and therefore did not return any answer, lest a clandestine correspondence should have been perniciously discovered. I will write to her soon. I am, dear Sir, &c.
"SAM. JOHNSON."

Having communicated to Lord Hailes what Dr. Johnson wrote concerning the question which perplexed me so much, his lordship wrote to me: "Your scruples have produced more fruit than I ever expected from them; an excellent dissertation on general principles of morals and law."

¹ A letter to him on the interesting subject of the family settlement, which I had read.

I wrote to Dr. Johnson on the 20th of February, complaining of melancholy, and expressing a strong desire to be with him ; informing him that the ten packets came all safe ; that Lord Hailes was much obliged to him, and said he had almost wholly removed his scruples against entails.

LETTER 240.

TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

" March 5, 1776.

" DEAR SIR,—I have not had your letter half an hour ; as you lay so much weight upon my notions, I should think it not just to delay my answer. I am very sorry that your melancholy should return, and should be sorry likewise if it could have no relief but from my company. My counsel you may have when you are pleased to require it ; but of my company you cannot in the next month have much, for Mr. Thrale will take me to Italy, he says, on the 1st of April.

" Let me warn you very earnestly against scruples. I am glad that you are reconciled to your settlement, and think it a great honour to have shaken Lord Hailes's opinion of entails. Do not, however, hope wholly to reason away your troubles ; do not feed them with attention, and they will die imperceptibly away. Fix your thoughts upon your business, fill your intervals with company, and sunshine will again break in upon your mind. If you will come to me, you must come very quickly ; and even then I know not but we may scour the country together, for I have a mind to see Oxford and Lichfield before I set out on this long journey. To this I can only add that I am, dear Sir, your most affectionate humble servant,

" SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 241.

TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

" March 12, 1776.

" DEAR SIR,—Very early in April we leave England, and in the beginning of the next week I shall leave London for a short time ; of this I think it necessary to inform you, that you may not be disappointed in any of your enterprises. I had not fully resolved to go into the country before this day. Please to make my compliments to Lord Hailes ; and mention very particularly to Mrs. Boswell my hope that she is reconciled to, Sir, your faithful servant,

" SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 242.

TO THE REV. JOHN WESLEY.

" Feb. 6, 1776.

SIR,—When I received your ' Commentary on the Bible,' I durst not at first flatter myself that I was to keep it, having so little claim to so valuable a present ; and when Mrs. Hall informed me of your kindness, was hindered from time to time from returning you those thanks, which I now entreat you to accept.—I have thanks likewise to return you for the edition of your important suffrage to my argument on the American question. To have gained

such a mind as yours may justly confirm me in my own opinion. What effect my paper has upon the public, I know not; but I have no reason to be discouraged. The lecturer was surely in the right, who, though he saw his audience slinking away, refused to quit the chair, while Plato stayed.—I am, reverend Sir, &c. SAM. JOHNSON."

Above thirty years ago, the heirs of Lord Chancellor Clarendon presented the university of Oxford with the continuation of his "History," and such other of his lordship's manuscripts as had not been published, on condition that the profits arising from their publication should be applied to the establishment of a *manège* in the university.¹ The gift was accepted in full convocation. A person being now recommended to Dr. Johnson, as fit to superintend this proposed riding-school, he exerted himself with that zeal for which he was remarkable upon every similar occasion. But, on inquiry into the matter, he found that the scheme was not likely to be soon carried into execution; the profits arising from the Clarendon press being, from some mismanagement, very scanty. This having been explained to him by a respectable dignitary of the church, who had good means of knowing it, he wrote a letter upon the subject, which at once exhibits his extraordinary precision and acuteness, and his warm attachment to his *alma mater*.

LETTER 243.

TO THE REV. DR. WETHERELL.

" March 12, 1776.

"DEAR SIR,—Few things are more unpleasant than the transaction of business with men who are above knowing or caring what they have to do; such as the trustees for Lord Cornbury's institution will, perhaps, appear, when you have read Dr.*****'s letter.

"The last part of the Doctor's letter is of great importance. The complaint² which he makes, I have heard long ago, and did not know but it was redressed. It is unhappy that a practice so erroneous has not been altered; for altered it must be, or our press will be useless, with all its privileges. The booksellers, who, like all other men, have strong prejudices in their own favour, are

¹ The Clarendon MSS., and any money which might arise from the sale or publication of them, were given by Catherine, Duchess Dowager of Queensbury, as a beginning of a fund for supporting a *manège* or academy for riding, and other useful exercises, in Oxford, pursuant to, and in confirmation of, the last will of Henry Lord Hyde, bearing date the 10th day of August, 1751.—HALL.

² I suppose the complaint was, that the trustees of the Oxford press did not allow the London booksellers a sufficient profit upon vending their publications.

enough inclined to think the practice of printing and selling books by any but themselves an encroachment on the rights of their fraternity; and have need of stronger inducements to circulate academical publications than those of another: for, of that mutual co-operation by which the general trade is carried on, the university can bear no part. Of those whom he neither loves nor fears, and from whom he expects no reciprocation of good offices, why should any man promote the interest but for profit? I suppose, with all our scholastic ignorance of mankind, we are still too knowing to expect that the booksellers will erect themselves into patrons, and buy and sell under the influence of a disinterested zeal for the promotion of learning.

"To the booksellers, if we look for either honour or profit from our press, not only their common profit, but something more must be allowed; and if books, printed at Oxford, are expected to be rated at a high price, that price must be levied on the public, and paid by the ultimate purchaser, not by the intermediate agents. What price shall be set upon the book is, to the booksellers, wholly indifferent, provided that they gain a proportionate profit by negotiating the sale. Why books printed at Oxford should be particularly dear, I am, however, unable to find. We pay no rent; we inherit many of our instruments and materials; lodging and victuals are cheaper than at London; and, therefore, workmanship ought, at least, not to be dearer. Our expenses are naturally less than those of booksellers; and, in most cases, communities are content with less profit than individuals.

"It is, perhaps, not considered through how many hands a book often passes, before it comes into those of the reader; or what part of the profit each hand must retain, as a motive for transmitting it to the next.

"We will call our primary agent in London, Mr. Cadell, who receives our books from us, gives them room in his warehouse, and issues them on demand. by him they are sold to Mr. Dilly, a wholesale bookseller, who sends them into the country; and the last seller is the country bookseller. Here are three profits to be paid between the printer and the reader, or, in the style of commerce, between the manufacturer and the consumer: and if any of these profits is too penuriously distributed; the process of commerce is interrupted.

"We are now come to the practical question, what is to be done? You will tell me, with reason, that I have said nothing, till I declare how much, according to my opinion, of the ultimate price ought to be distributed through the whole succession of sale.

"The deduction, I am afraid, will appear very great; but let it be considered before it is refused. We must allow, for profit, between thirty and thirty-five per cent. between six and seven shillings in the pound; that is, for every book which costs the last buyer twenty shillings, we must charge Mr. Cadell with something less than fourteen. We must set the copies at fourteen shillings each, and superadd what is called the quarterly look, or for every hundred books so charged we must deliver an hundred and four.

"The profits will then stand thus:—Mr. Cadell, who runs no hazard, and

gives no credit, will be paid for warehouse room and attendance by a shilling profit on each book, and his chance of the quarterly book: Mr. Dilly, who buys the book for fifteen shillings, and who will expect the quarterly book if he takes five and twenty, will send it to his country customer at sixteen and sixpence, by which, at the hazard of loss, and the certainty of long credit, he gains the regular profit of ten per cent. which is expected in the wholesale trade: the country bookseller, buying at sixteen and sixpence, and commonly trusting a considerable time, gains but three and sixpence, and if he trusts a year, not much more than two and sixpence; otherwise than as he may, perhaps, take as long credit as he gives.

"With less profit than this, and more you see he cannot have, the country bookseller cannot live; for his receipts are small, and his debts sometimes bad.

"Thus, dear Sir, I have been incited by Dr.*****'s letter to give you a detail of the circulation of books, which, perhaps, every man has not had opportunity of knowing; and which those who know it, do not, perhaps, always distinctly consider.—I am, &c.

SAM. JOHNSON."¹

Having arrived in London late on Friday, the 15th of March, I hastened next morning to wait on Dr. Johnson, at his house; but found he was removed from Johnson's Court, No. 7, to Bolt Court, No. 8, still keeping to his favourite Fleet Street. My reflection at the time upon this change, as marked in my journal, is as follows: "I felt a foolish regret that he had left a court which bore his name;² but it was not foolish to be affected with some tenderness of regard for a place in which I had seen him a great deal, from whence I had often issued a better and a happier man than when I went in, and which had often appeared to my imagination, while I trod its pavement in the solemn darkness of the night, to be sacred to wisdom and piety." Being informed that he was at Mr. Thrale's in the borough,³ I hastened thither, and found Mrs. Thrale and him

¹ I am happy, in giving this full and clear statement to the public, to vindicate, by the authority of the greatest author of his age, that respectable body of men, the booksellers of London, from vulgar reflections, as if their profits were exorbitant, when, in truth, Dr. Johnson has here allowed them more than they usually demand.

² He said, when in Scotland, that he was *Johnson of that ilk*.

³ I went into his room on the morning of my birthday (1776), and said to him, "Nobody sends me any verses now, because I am five and thirty years old; and Stella was fed with them till forty-six, I remember." My being just recovered from illness and confinement, will account for the manner in which he burst out suddenly, without the least previous hesitation, and without having entertained the smallest intention towards it half a minute before:—

"Oft in danger, yet alive,
We are come to thirty-five;

at breakfast. I was kindly welcomed. In a moment he was in a full glow of conversation, and I felt myself elevated as if brought into another state of being. Mrs. Thrale and I looked to each other while he talked, and our looks expressed our congenial admiration and affection for him. I shall ever recollect this scene with great pleasure. I exclaimed to her, "I am now, intellectually, *Hermippus redivivus* ; I am quite restored by him, by transfusion of mind." "There are many," she replied, "who admire and respect Mr. Johnson ; but you and I *love* him."

He seemed very happy in the near prospect of going to Italy with Mr. and Mrs. Thrale. "But," said he, "before leaving England I am to take a jaunt to Oxford, Birmingham, my native city Lichfield, and my old friend Dr. Taylor's, at Ashbourne, in Derbyshire. I shall go in a few days, and you, Boswell, shall go with me." I was ready to accompany him ; being willing even to leave London to have the pleasure of his conversation.

I mentioned with much regret the extravagance of the representative of a great family in Scotland, by which there was danger of its being ruined ; and as Johnson respected it for its antiquity, he joined with me in thinking it would be happy if this person should

Long may better years arrive,
 Better years than thirty-five.
 Could philosophers contrive
 Life to stop at thirty-five,
 Time his hours should never drive
 O'er the bounds of thirty-five.
 High to soar, and deep to dive,
 Nature gives at thirty-five.
 Ladies, stock and tend your hive,
 Trifle not at thirty-five :
 For, howe'er we boast and strive,
 Life declines from thirty-five ;
 He that ever hopes to thrive
 Must begin by thirty-five ;
 And all who wisely wish to wive
 Must look on Thrale at thirty-five."

"And now," said he, as I was writing them down, "you may see what it is to come for poetry to a dictionary-maker ; you may observe that the rhymes run in alphabetical order exactly." And so they do. Dr. Johnson did indeed possess an almost Tuscan power of improvisation.—Piorzi. He was much pleased with an Italian *improvisatore*, whom he saw at Streatham, and with whom he talked much in Latin. He told him, if he had not been a witness to his faculty himself, he should not have thought it possible. He said, Isaac Hawkins Browne had endeavoured at it in English but could not get beyond thirty verses —
 HAWKINS.

die. Mrs. Thrale seemed shocked at this, as feudal barbarity, and said, "I do not understand this preference of the estate to its owner ; of the land to the man who walks upon that land." JOHNSON. "Nay, madam, it is not a preference of the land to its owner ; it is the preference of a family to an individual. Here is an establishment in a country, which is of importance for ages, not only to the chief but to his people ; an establishment which extends upwards and downwards ; that this should be destroyed by one idle fellow is a sad thing."

He said, "Entails are good, because it is good to preserve in a country serieses of men, to whom the people are accustomed to look up as to their leaders. But I am for leaving a quantity of land in commerce, to excite industry, and keep money in the country ; for if no land were to be bought in the country, there would be no encouragement to acquire wealth, because a family could not be founded there ; or, if it were acquired, it must be carried away to another country where land may be bought. And although the land in every country will remain the same, and be as fertile where there is no money, as where there is, yet all that portion of the happiness of civil life, which is produced by money circulating in a country, would be lost." BOSWELL. "Then, Sir, would it be for the advantage of a country that all its lands were sold at once?" JOHNSON. "So far, Sir, as money produces good, it would be an advantage ; for then that country would have as much money circulating in it as it is worth. But to be sure this would be counterbalanced by disadvantages attending a total change of proprietors."

I expressed my opinion that the power of entailing should be limited thus: "That there should be one-third, or perhaps one-half, of the land of a country kept free for commerce ; that the proportion allowed to be entailed should be parcelled out so that no family could entail above a certain quantity. Let a family, according to the abilities of its representatives, be richer or poorer in different generations, or always rich if its representatives be always wise ; but let its absolute permanency be moderate. In this way we should be certain of there being always a number of established roots ; and as, in the course of nature, there is in every age an extinction of some families, there would be continual openings for men ambitious

of perpetuity, to plant a stock in the entail ground.”¹ JOHNSON “Why, Sir, mankind will be better able to regulate the system of entails, when the evil of too much land being locked up by them is felt, than we can do at present when it is not felt.”

I mentioned Dr. Adam Smith’s book on “The Wealth of Nations,” which was just published, and that Sir John Pringle had observed to me, that Dr. Smith, who had never been in trade, could not be expected to write well on that subject, any more than a lawyer upon physic. JOHNSON. “He is mistaken, Sir; a man who has never been engaged in trade himself may undoubtedly write well upon trade, and there is nothing which requires more to be illustrated by philosophy than trade does. As to mere wealth, that is to say, money, it is clear that one nation or one individual cannot increase its store but by making another poorer : but trade procures what is more valuable, the reciprocation of the peculiar advantages of different countries. A merchant seldom thinks but of his own particular trade. To write a good book upon it, a man must have extensive views. It is not necessary to have practised, to write well upon a subject.” I mentioned law as a subject on which no man could write well without practice. JOHNSON. “Why, Sir, in England, where so much money is to be got by the practice of the law, most of our writers upon it have been in practice; though Blackstone had not been much in practice when he published his ‘Commentaries.’ But upon the continent, the great writers on law have not all been in practice : Grotius, indeed, was; but Puffendorf was not; Burlamaqui was not.”

When we had talked of the great consequence which a man acquired by being employed in his profession, I suggested a doubt of the justice of the general opinion, that it is improper in a lawyer to solicit employment; for why, I urged, should it not be equally allowable to solicit that as the means of consequence, as it is to so-

¹ The privilege of perpetuating in a family an estate and arms *indefeasibly* from generation to generation is enjoyed by none of his majesty’s subjects except in Scotland, where the legal fiction of *fine* and *recovery* is unknown. It is a privilege so proud, that I should think it would be proper to have the exercise of it dependent on the royal prerogative. It seems absurd to permit the power of perpetuating their representation to men, who, having had no eminent merit, have truly no name. The king, as the impartial father of his people, would never refuse to grant the privilege to those who deserved it.

licit votes to be elected a member of Parliament? Mr. Strahan had told me that a countryman of his and mine, who had risen to eminence in the law, had, when first making his way, solicited him to get him employed in city causes. JOHNSON. "Sir, it is wrong to stir up lawsuits; but when once it is certain that a lawsuit is to go on, there is nothing wrong in a lawyer's endeavouring that he shall have the benefit, rather than another." BOSWELL. "You would not solicit employment, Sir, if you were a lawyer." JOHNSON. "No, Sir; but not because I should think it wrong, but because I should disdain it." This was a good distinction, which will be felt by men of just pride. He proceeded: "However, I would not have a lawyer to be wanting to himself in using fair means. I would have him to inject a little hint now and then, to prevent his being overlooked."

Lord Mountstuart's bill for a Scotch militia, in supporting which his lordship had made an able speech¹ in the House of Commons, was now a pretty general topic of conversation. JOHNSON. "As Scotland contributes so little land-tax towards the general support of the nation, it ought not to have a militia paid out of the general fund, unless it should be thought for the general interest that Scotland should be protected from an invasion, which no man can think will happen; for what enemy would invade Scotland, where there is nothing to be got? No, Sir; now that the Scotch have not the pay of English soldiers spent among them, as so many troops are sent abroad, they are trying to get money another way, by having a militia paid. If they are afraid, and seriously desire to have an armed force to defend them, they should pay for it. Your scheme is to retain a part of your land-tax, by making us pay and clothe your militia." BOSWELL. "You should not talk of *we* and *you*, Sir; there is now an *union*." JOHNSON. "There must be a distinction of interest, while the proportions of land-tax are so unequal. If Yorkshire should say, 'Instead of paying our land-tax, we will keep

¹ Boswell writes to Mr. Wilkes on this subject, April 20, 1776:—"I am delighted to find that my honoured friend and Mæcenas, my Lord Mountstuart, made an excellent speech on the Scotch militia bill."—Wilkes's Correspondence, vol. iv. p. 319. Mr. Boswell's *Mæcenas*, however, subsequently disappointed his hopes, and hence, perhaps, some of those observations about "*courting the great*" and "*apathy of patrons*" which Mr. Boswell occasionally makes—C

a greater number of militia,' it would be unreasonable." In this argument my friend was certainly in the wrong. The land-tax is as unequally proportioned between different parts of England, as between England and Scotland; nay, it is considerably unequal in Scotland itself. But the land-tax is but a small part of the numerous branches of public revenue, all of which Scotland pays precisely as England does. A French invasion made in Scotland, would soon penetrate into England.

He thus discoursed upon supposed obligation in settling estates : " Where a man gets the unlimited property of an estate, there is no obligation upon him in *justice* to leave it to one person rather than to another. There is a motive of preference from *kindness*, and this kindness is generally entertained for the nearest relation. If I *owe* a particular man a sum of money, I am obliged to let that man have the next money I get, and cannot in justice let another have it; but if I owe money to no man, I may dispose of what I get as I please. There is not a *debitum justitiæ* to a man's next heir; there is only a *debitum caritatis*. It is plain, then, that I have morally a choice according to my liking. If I have a brother in want, he has a claim from affection to my assistance; but if I have also a brother in want, whom I like better, he has a preferable claim. The right of an heir at law is only this, that he is to have the succession to an estate, in case no other person is appointed to it by the owner. His right is merely preferable to that of the king."

We got into a boat to cross over to Blackfriars; and as we moved along the Thames, I talked to him of a little volume, which, altogether unknown to him, was advertised to be published in a few days, under the title of "Johnsoniana, or Bon-mots of Dr. Johnson." JOHNSON. "Sir, it is a mighty impudent thing." BOSWELL. "Pray, Sir, could you have no redress if you were to prosecute a publisher for bringing out, under your name, what you never said, and ascribing to you dull stupid nonsense, or making you swear profanely, as many ignorant relaters of your *bon-mots* do?" JOHNSON. "No, Sir; there will always be some truth mixed with the falsehood, and how can it be ascertained how much is true and how much is false? Besides, Sir, what damages would a jury give me for having been represented as swearing?" BOSWELL. "I think, Sir, you

should at least disavow such a publication, because the world and posterity might with much plausible foundation say, 'Here is a volume which was publicly advertised and came out in Dr. Johnson's own name, and, by his silence, was admitted by him to be genuine.' " JOHNSON. "I shall give myself no trouble about the matter."

He was, perhaps, above suffering from such spurious publications; but I could not help thinking, that many men would be much injured in their reputation, by having absurd and vicious sayings imputed to them; and that redress ought in such cases to be given.

He said, "The value of every story depends on its being true. A story is a picture either of an individual or of human nature in general: if it be false, it is a picture of nothing. For instance: suppose a man should tell that Johnson, before setting out for Italy, as he had to cross the Alps, sat down to make himself wings. This many people would believe: but it would be a picture of nothing. *****¹ (naming a worthy friend of ours) used to think a story a story, till I showed him that truth was essential to it." I observed, that Foote entertained us with stories which were not true; but that, indeed, it was properly not as narratives that Foote's stories pleased us, but as collections of ludicrous images. JOHNSON. "Foote is quite impartial, for he tells lies of everybody."²

The importance of strict and scrupulous veracity cannot be too often inculcated. Johnson was known to be so rigidly attentive to it, that even in his common conversation the slightest circumstance was mentioned with exact precision.³

¹ Although Mr. Langton was a man of strict and accurate veracity, I suspect, from the term *worthy friend*, which Boswell generally appropriates to Mr. Langton, as well as the number of asterisks, that he was here meant: if so, the opinion which Johnson corrected was probably one stated by Mr. Langton in *very early* life, for he knew Johnson when he was only fifteen years of age.—C.

² On another occasion he said, "A story is a specimen of human manners, and derives its sole value from its truth. When Foote has told me something, I dismiss it from my mind like a passing shadow when Reynolds tells me something, I consider myself as possessed of an idea the more."—PROZZI. A gentleman sitting next to Johnson at a table where Foote was entertaining the company with some exaggerated recitals, whispered his neighbour, "Why, Dr. Johnson, it is impossible that this impudent fellow should know the truth of half what he has told us." "Nay, Sir," replied Johnson, hastily, "if we venture to come into company with Foote, we have no right, I think, to look for truth."—CRADOCK.

³ One reason why his memory was so particularly exact might be derived from his rigid attention to veracity; being always resolved to relate every fact as it stood, he looked even on the smaller parts of life with minute attention, and remembered such passages as escape

The knowledge of his having such a principle and habit made his friends have a perfect reliance on the truth of everything that he told, however it might have been doubted if told by many others. As an instance of this, I may mention an odd incident which he related as having happened to him one night in Fleet Street. "A gentlewoman," said he, "begged I would give her my arm to assist her in crossing the street, which I accordingly did; upon which she offered me a shilling, supposing me to be the watchman. I perceived that she was somewhat in liquor." This, if told by most people, would have been thought an invention; when told by Johnson, it was believed by his friends as much as if they had seen what passed.¹

cursory and common observers. His veracity was, indeed, from the most trivial to the most solemn occasions, strict even to severity; he scorned to embellish a story with fictitious circumstances, which (he used to say) took off from its real value. "A story," he said, "should be a specimen of life and manners; but if the surrounding circumstances are false, as it is no more a representation of reality, it is no longer worthy our attention."—Piozzi.

¹ As he was walking along the Strand, a gentleman stepped out of some neighbouring tavern, with his napkin in his hand and no hat, and stopping him as civilly as he could: "I beg your pardon, Sir; but you are Dr. Johnson, I believe." "Yes, Sir." "We have a wager depending on your reply: pray, Sir, is it *irreparable* or *irreparable* that one should say?" "The *last*, I think, Sir," answered Dr. Johnson, "for the adverb [adjective] ought to follow the verb; but you had better consult my Dictionary than me, for that was the result of more thought than you will now give me time for." "No, no," replied the gentleman, gaily, "the *book* I have no certainty at all of; but here is the *author*, to whom I referred: I have won my twenty guineas quite fairly, and am much obliged to you, Sir;" so shaking Dr. Johnson kindly by the hand, he went back to finish his dinner or dessert. He once told me that a young gentleman called on him one morning, and told him that, having dropped suddenly into an ample fortune, he was willing to qualify himself for genteel society by adding some literature to his other endowments, and wished to be put in an easy way of obtaining it. Johnson recommended the University; "for you read Latin, Sir, with *facility*." "I read it a little, to be sure, Sir." "But do you read it *with facility*, I say?" "Upon my word, Sir, I do not very well know, but I rather believe not." Dr. Johnson now began to recommend other branches of science; and, advising him to study natural history, there arose some talk about animals, and their divisions into oviparous and viviparous: "And the cat here, Sir," said the youth, who wished for instruction, "pray in which class is she?" Our Doctor's patience and desire of doing good began now to give way. "You would do well," said he, "to look for some person to be always about you, Sir, who is capable of explaining such matters, and not come to us to know whether the cat lays eggs or not: get a discreet man to keep you company; there are many who would be glad of your table and fifty pounds a year." The young gentleman retired, and in less than a week informed his friends that he had fixed on a preceptor to whom no objections could be made; but when he named as such one of the most distinguished characters* in our age or nation, Dr. Johnson fairly gave himself up to an honest burst of laughter, at seeing this youth at such a surprising distance from common knowledge of the world.—Piozzi.

* Mr. Burke.—Malone MS.—Q.

We landed at the Temple Stairs, where we parted. I found him in the evening in Mrs. Williams's room. We talked of religious orders. He said, "It is as unreasonable for a man to go into a Carthusian convent for fear of being immoral, as for a man to cut off his hands for fear he should steal. There is, indeed, great resolution in the immediate act of dismembering himself; but when that is once done, he has no longer any merit: for though it is out of his power to steal, yet he may all his life be a thief in his heart. So when a man has once become a Carthusian, he is obliged to continue so, whether he chooses it or not. Their silence too, is absurd. We read in the Gospel of the apostles being sent to preach, but not to hold their tongues. All severity that does not tend to increase good, or prevent evil, is idle. I said to the Lady Abbess of a convent, 'Madam, you are here, not for the love of virtue, but the fear of vice.' She said, 'She should remember this as long as she lived.'" I thought it hard to give her this view of her situation, when she could not help it; and, indeed, I wondered at the whole of what he now said; because, both in his "Rambler" and "Idler," he treats religious austerities with much solemnity of respect.

Finding him still persevering in his abstinence from wine, I ventured to speak to him of it. JOHNSON. "Sir, I have no objection to a man's drinking wine, if he can do it in moderation. I found myself apt to go to excess in it, and therefore, after having been for some time without it, on account of illness, I thought it better not to return to it. Every man is to judge for himself, according to the effects which he experiences. One of the fathers tells us, he found fasting made him so peevish that he did not practise it."

Though he often enlarged upon the evil of intoxication, he was by no means harsh and unforgiving to those who indulged in occasional excess in wine. One of his friends, I well remember, came to sup at a tavern with him and some other gentlemen, and too plainly discovered that he had drunk too much at dinner. When one who loved mischief, thinking to produce a severe censure, asked Johnson, a few days afterwards, "Well, Sir, what did your friend say to you, as an apology for being in such a situation?" Johnson answered, "Sir, he said all that a man *should* say: he said he was sorry for it"

I heard him once give a very judicious practical advice upon the subject : " A man who has been drinking wine at all freely should never go into a new company. With those who have partaken of wine with him, he may be pretty well in unison ; but he will probably be offensive, or appear ridiculous, to other people."

He allowed very great influence to education. " I do not deny, Sir, but there is some original difference in minds ; but it is nothing in comparison of what is formed by education. We may instance the science of *numbers*, which all minds are equally capable of attaining : yet we find a prodigious difference in the powers of different men, in that respect, after they are grown up, because their minds have been more or less exercised in it : and I think the same cause will explain the difference of excellence in other things, gradations admitting always some difference in the first principles."

This is a difficult subject ; but it is best to hope that diligence may do a great deal. We are *sure* of what it can do, in increasing our mechanical force and dexterity.

I again visited him on Monday. He took occasion to enlarge, as he often did, upon the wretchedness of a sea-life. " A ship is worse than a gaol. There is, in a gaol, better air, better company, better convenience of every kind ; and a ship has the additional disadvantage of being in danger. When men come to like a sea-life, they are not fit to live on land." " Then," said I, " it would be cruel in a father to breed his son to the sea." JOHNSON. " It would be cruel in a father who thinks as I do. Men go to sea, before they know the unhappiness of that way of life ; and when they have come to know it, they cannot escape from it, because it is then too late to choose another profession ; as indeed is generally the case with men, when they have once engaged in any particular way of life."

CHAPTER IX.

1776.

~~Excursion~~ to Oxford with Boswell—Ornamental Architecture—Statuary—Advice to Hypochondriacs—"Anatomy of Melancholy"—Dr. Wetherell—Dr. Adams—Conversation—Bishop Horne—Walten's "Lives"—Biography—Dartineuf—Gibbon—Steele—"Tristram Shandy"—Burke—Blenheim—Taverns and Inns—Dyer's "Fleece"—Grainger's "Sugar Cane"—Birmingham—Legitimation—Marriage—Quakers—Holidays—Nelson's "Festivals"—Mr. Boulton—Lichfield and its Inhabitants.

ON Tuesday, 19th March, which was fixed for our proposed jaunt, we met in the morning at the Somerset coffee-house in the Strand, where we were taken up by the Oxford coach. He was accompanied by Mr. Gwyn, the architect; and a gentleman of Merton college, whom he did not know, had the fourth seat. We soon got into conversation; for it was very remarkable of Johnson, that the presence of a stranger had no restraint upon his talk. I observed that Garrick, who was about to quit the stage, would soon have an easier life. JOHNSON. "I doubt that, Sir." BOSWELL. "Why, Sir, he will be Atlas with the burthen off his back." JOHNSON. "But I know not, Sir, if he will be so steady without his load. However, he should never play any more, but be entirely the gentleman, and not partly the player: he should no longer subject himself to be hissed by a mob, or to be insolently treated by performers, whom he used to rule with a high hand, and who would gladly retaliate." BOSWELL. "I think he should play once a year for the benefit of decayed actors, as it has been said he means to do." JOHNSON. "Alas, Sir! he will soon be a decayed actor himself."

Johnson expressed his disapprobation of ornamenta^l architecture, such as magnificent columns supporting a portico, or expensive pilasters supporting merely their own capitals, "because it consumes labour disproportionate to its utility." For the same reason he satirised statuary. "Painting," said he, "consumes labour not disproportionate to its effect; but a fellow will hack half a year at a

block of marble to make something in stone that hardly resembles a man. The value of statuary is owing to its difficulty. You would not value the finest head cut upon a carrot." Here he seemed to me to be strangely deficient in taste ;¹ for surely statuary is a noble art of imitation, and preserves a wonderful expression of the varieties of the human frame ; and although it must be allowed that the circumstances of difficulty enhance the value of a marble head, we should consider, that if it requires a long time in the performance, it has a proportionate value in durability.

Gwyn was a fine lively rattling fellow. Dr. Johnson kept him in subjection, but with a kindly authority. The spirit of the artist, however, rose against what he thought a Gothic attack, and he made a brisk defence. "What, Sir, will you allow no value to beauty in architecture or in statuary ! Why should we allow it then in writing ? Why do you take the trouble to give us so many fine allusions, and bright images, and elegant phrases ? You might convey all your instruction without these ornaments." Johnson smiled with complacency ; but said, "Why, Sir, all these ornaments are useful, because they obtain an easier reception for truth ; but a building is not at all more convenient for being decorated with superfluous carved work."

Gwyn at last was lucky enough to make one reply to Dr. Johnson, which he allowed to be excellent. Johnson censured him for taking down a church which might have stood many years, and building a new one at a different place, for no other reason but that there might be a direct road to a new bridge ; and his expression was, "You are taking a church out of the way, that the people may go in a straight line to the bridge." "No, Sir," said Gwyn, "I am putting the church *in* the way, that the people may not *go out of*

¹ Dr. Johnson does not seem to have objected to ornamental architecture or statuary *per se*, but to labour *disproportionate* to its utility or effect. In this view, his criticisms are just. The late style of building introduced into London, of colonnades and porticos, without any regard to aspect, climate, or utility, is so absurd to reason, so offensive to taste, and so adverse to domestic comfort, that it reconciles us to the short-lived materials of which these edifices are composed. It would have been well if we had, according to Johnson's sober advice, thought it necessary that the "*magnificence of porticos*," and the "*expense of pilasters*," should have borne some degree of *proportion* to their *utility*. With regard to "statuary," when it does "preserve the varieties of the human frame," it deserves all that Mr. Boswell says for it : but Johnson's objection was that it more frequently produced abortive failures, "*hardly resembling man*."—C.

the way." JOHNSON (with a hearty loud laugh of approbation). "Speak no more. Rest your colloquial fame upon this."

Upon our arrival at Oxford, Dr. Johnson and I went directly to University College, but were disappointed on finding that one of the fellows, his friend Mr. Scott, who accompanied him from Newcastle to Edinburgh, was gone to the country. We put up at the Angel inn, and passed the evening by ourselves in easy and familiar conversation. Talking of constitutional melancholy, he observed,—“A man so afflicted, Sir, must divert distressing thoughts, and not combat with them.” BOSWELL. “May not he think them down, Sir?” JOHNSON. “No, Sir. To attempt to *think them down* is madness. He should have a lamp constantly burning in his bed-chamber during the night, and if wakefully disturbed, take a book, and read, and compose himself to rest. To have the management of the mind is a great art, and it may be attained in a considerable degree by experience and habitual exercise.” BOSWELL. “Should not he provide amusements for himself? Would it not, for instance, be right for him to take a course of chemistry?” JOHNSON. “Let him take a course of chemistry, or a course of rope-dancing, or a course of anything to which he is inclined at the time. Let him contrive to have as many retreats for his mind as he can, as many things to which it can fly from itself. Burton’s ‘Anatomy of Melancholy,’ is a valuable work. It is, perhaps, overloaded with quotation. But there is a great spirit and a great power in what Burton says, when he writes from his own mind.”

Next morning we visited Dr. Wetherell, master of University College, with whom Dr. Johnson conferred on the most advantageous mode of disposing of the books printed at the Clarendon press, on which subject his letter has been inserted in a former page. I often had occasion to remark, Johnson loved business, loved to have his wisdom actually operate on real life. Dr. Wetherell and I talked of him without reserve in his own presence. WETHERELL. “I would have given him a hundred guineas if he would have written a preface to his ‘Political Tracts,’ by way of a discourse on the British constitution.” BOSWELL. “Dr. Johnson, though in his writings, and upon all occasions, a great friend to the constitution, both in church and state, has never written expressly in support of

either. There is really a claim upon him for both. I am sure he could give a volume of no great bulk upon each, which would comprise all the substance, and with his spirit would effectually maintain them. He should erect a fort on the confines of each." I could perceive that he was displeased with this dialogue. He burst out, "Why should I be always writing?" I hoped he was conscious that the debt was just, and meant to discharge it, though he disliked being dunned.

We then went to Pembroke College, and waited on his old friend Dr. Adams, the master of it, whom I found to be a most polite, pleasing, communicative man. Before his advancement to the headship of his college, I had intended to go and visit him at Shrewsbury, where he was rector of St. Chad's, in order to get from him what particulars he could recollect of Johnson's academical life. He now obligingly gave me part of that authentic information, which, with what I afterwards owed his kindness, will be found incorporated in its proper place in this work.

Dr. Adams has distinguished himself by an able Answer to David Hume's "Essay on Miracles." He told me he had once dined in company with Hume in London: that Hume shook hands with him, and said, "You have treated me much better than I deserve;" and that they exchanged visits. I took the liberty to object to treating an infidel writer with smooth civility. Where there is a controversy concerning a passage in a classic author, or concerning a question in antiquities, or any other subject in which human happiness is not deeply interested, a man may treat his antagonist with politeness and even respect. But where the controversy is concerning the truth of religion, it is of such vast importance to him who maintains it, to obtain the victory, that the person of an opponent ought not to be spared. If a man firmly believes that religion is an invaluable treasure, he will consider a writer who endeavours to deprive mankind of it as a *robber*; he will look upon him as *odious*, though the infidel might think himself in the right. A robber who reasons as the gang do in the "Beggar's Opera," who call themselves *practical* philosophers, and may have as much sincerity as pernicious *speculative* philosophers, is not the less an object of just indignation. An abandoned profligate may think that it is not wrong to debauch my

wife, but shall I, therefore, not detest him? And if I catch him in making an attempt, shall I treat him with politeness? No, I will kick him down stairs, or run him through the body; that is, if I really love my wife, or have a true rational notion of honour. An infidel then should not be treated handsomely by a Christian, merely because he endeavours to rob with ingenuity. I do declare, however, that I am exceedingly unwilling to be provoked to anger, and could I be persuaded that truth would not suffer from a cool moderation in its defenders, I should wish to preserve good humour, at least, in every controversy; nor, indeed, do I see why a man should lose his temper while he does all he can to refute an opponent. I think ridicule may be fairly used against an infidel; for instance, if he be an ugly fellow, and yet absurdly vain of his person, we may contrast his appearance with Cicero's beautiful image of Virtue, could she be seen. Johnson coincided with me and said, "when a man voluntarily engages in an important controversy, he is to do all he can to lessen his antagonist, because authority from personal respect has much weight with most people, and often more than reasoning. If my antagonist writes bad language, though that may not be essential to the question, I will attack him for his bad language." ADAMS. "You would not jostle a chimney-sweeper." JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir, if it were necessary to jostle him *down*."

Dr. Adams told us, that in some of the colleges at Oxford, the fellows had excluded the students from social intercourse with them in the common room. JOHNSON. "They are in the right, Sir: there can be no real conversation, no fair exertion of mind amongst them, if the young men are by: for a man who has a character does not choose to stake it in their presence." BOSWELL. "But, Sir, may there not be very good conversation without a contest for superiority?" JOHNSON. "No animated conversation, Sir; for it cannot be but one or other will come off superior. I do not mean that the victor must have the better of the argument, for he may take the weak side; but his superiority of parts and knowledge will necessarily appear; and he to whom he thus shows himself superior is lessened in the eyes of the young men. You know it was said, '*Mallem cum Scaligero errare quam cum Clavio recte sapere.*' In the same manner take Bentley's and Jason de Nores' Comments upon

Horace,¹ you will admire Bentley more when wrong, than Jason when right."

We walked with Dr. Adams into the master's garden, and into the common room. JOHNSON (after a reverie of meditation). "Ay! here I used to play at draughts with Phil. Jones and Fludyer.² Jones loved beer, and did not get very forward in the church. Fludyer turned out a scoundrel, a whig, and said he was ashamed of having been bred at Oxford. He had a living at Putney; and got under the eye of some retainers to the court at that time, and so became a violent whig; but he had been a scoundrel all along, to be sure." BOSWELL. "Was he a scoundrel, Sir, in any other way than that of being a political scoundrel? Did he cheat at draughts?" JOHNSON. "Sir, we never played for *money*."

He then carried me to visit Dr. Bentham, canon of Christ Church, and divinity professor, with whose learned and lively conversation we were much pleased. He gave us an invitation to dinner, which Dr. Johnson told me was a high honour. "Sir, it is a great thing to dine with the canons of Christ Church." We could not accept his invitation, as we were engaged to dine at University College. We had an excellent dinner there, with the masters and fellows, it being St. Outhbert's day, which is kept by them as a festival, as he was a saint of Durham, with which this college is much connected.

We drank tea with Dr. Horne, late President of Magdalen College and Bishop of Norwich, of whose abilities in different respects the public has had eminent proofs, and the esteem annexed to whose character was increased by knowing him personally. He had talked of publishing an edition of Walton's *Lives*, but had laid aside that design, upon Dr. Johnson's telling him, from mistake, that Lord Hailes intended to do it. I had wished to negotiate between Lord Hailes and him, that one or other should perform so good a work. JOHNSON. "In order to do it well, it will be necessary to collect all the editions of Walton's *Lives*. By way of adapting the book to the taste of the present age, they have, in a late edition, left out a

¹ A learned Cypriot, who, when the Turks took Cyprus in 1570, retired into Italy, where he published several Italian and Latin works; among the latter was a "Commentary on Horace's Art of Poetry."—C.

² *Fludyer* entered within a month of Johnson's entrance. Jones must have been about a year their senior, having become M.A. March, 1784.—HALL.

vision which he relates Dr. Donne had, but it should be restored;¹ and there should be a critical catalogue given of the works of the different persons whose lives were written by Walton, and therefore their works must be carefully read by the editor."

We then went to Trinity College, where he introduced me to Mr. Thomas Warton, with whom we passed a part of the evening. We talked of biography. JOHNSON. "It is rarely well executed. They only who live with a man can write his life with any genuine exactness and discrimination; and few people who have lived with a man know what to remark about him. The chaplain of a late bishop,² whom I was to assist in writing some memoirs of his lordship, could tell me scarcely anything."

I said, Mr. Robert Dodsley's life should be written, as he had been so much connected with the wits of his time, and by his literary merit had raised himself from the station of a footman. Mr. Warton said, he had published a little volume under the title of "The Muse in Livery." JOHNSON. "I doubt whether Dodsley's brother would thank a man who should write his life; yet Dodsley himself was not unwilling that his original low condition should be recollected. When Lord Lyttelton's 'Dialogues of the Dead' came out, one of which is between Apicius, an ancient epicure, and Dartineuf,⁴ a modern epicure, Dodsley said to me, 'I knew Dartineuf well, for I was once his footman.'"

Biography led us to speak of Dr. John Campbell, who had written

¹ The vision which Johnson speaks of was not in the original publication of Walton's "Life of Dr. Donne," in 1640. It is not found in the three earliest editions; but was first introduced into the fourth, in 1765. I have not been able to discover what modern republication is alluded to in which it was omitted. It has very properly been restored by Dr. Zouch.—J. BOSWELL, jun.

² The Bishop was Zachary Pearce, and the Chaplain, Mr. Derby.

³ It has been mentioned to me by an accurate English friend, that Dr. Johnson could never have used the phrase *almost nothing*, as not being English; and therefore I have put another in its place. At the same time, I am not quite convinced it is not good English. For the best writers use this phrase, "*little or nothing*," i. e. almost so little as to be nothing.

⁴ This gentleman, whose proper name was *Charles Dartiquenave* (pronounced and commonly written Darteneuf), is now only recollected as a celebrated epicure; but he was a man of wit, pleasure, and political importance at the beginning of the last century—the associate of Swift, Pope, Addison, and Steele—a contributor to the Tatler, and a member of the Kit-Cat-Club, of which collection his portrait is one of the best. He was Paymaster of the Board of Works, and surveyor of the royal gardens; and died in 1737. It was suspected that he was a natural son of Charles the Second, by a foreign lady; and his physiognomy seems to evidence a foreign origin.—C.

a considerable part of the "*Biographia Britannica*." Johnson, though he valued him highly, was of opinion that there was not so much in his great work, "A Political Survey of Great Britain," as the world had been taught to expect;¹ and had said to me that he believed Campbell's disappointment on account of the bad success of that work had killed him. He this evening observed of it, "That work was his death." Mr. Warton, not adverting to his meaning, answered, "I believe so, from the great attention he bestowed on it." JOHNSON. "Nay, Sir, he died of *want* of attention, if he died at all by that book."

We talked of a work much in vogue at that time, written in a very mellifluous style, but which, under pretext of another subject, contained much artful infidelity. I said it was not fair to attack us unexpectedly; he should have warned us of our danger, before we entered his garden of flowery eloquence, by advertising, "Spring-guns and men-traps set here." The author had been an Oxonian, and was remembered there for having "turned Papist." I observed, that as he had changed several times—from the church of England to the church of Rome—from the church of Rome to infidelity—I did not despair yet of seeing him a methodist preacher. JOHNSON (laughing). "It is said that his range has been more extensive, and that he has once been Mahometan. However, now that he has published his infidelity, he will probably persist in it."² BOSWELL. "I am not quite sure of that, Sir."

I mentioned Sir Richard Steele having published his "Christian Hero," with the avowed purpose of obliging himself to lead a religious life; yet that his conduct was by no means strictly suitable. JOHNSON. "Steele, I believe, practised the lighter vices."

¹ Yet surely it is a very useful work, and of wonderful research and labour for one man to have executed.

² As there can be no doubt that Gibbon and his History are the author and the work here alluded to, I once thought that some sceptical expressions in the celebrated 15th and 16th chapters might have prompted this sarcasm, but I am now inclined to suspect that it may have referred to some Oxford rumours of earlier infidelity. Gibbon, in his Memoirs, confesses that the erratic course of study, which finally led to his conversion to Popery, began at Oxford by a turn towards "oriental learning and an inclination to study Arabic." "His tutor," he adds, "discouraged this childish fancy." He complains, too, of the invidious *whispers* which were afterwards circulated in Oxford on the subject of his apostacy; and as we may be certain that Johnson did not speak without a meaning, I now believe that some whisper of this early inclination to Arabic learning and the language of the Koran may have reached Johnson, and occasioned this sarcasm.—C. 1835.

Mr. Warton, being engaged, could not sup with us at our inn; we had therefore another evening by ourselves. I asked Johnson whether a man's being forward to make himself known to eminent people, and seeing as much of life, and getting as much information as he could in every way, was not yet lessening himself by his forwardness. JOHNSON. "No, Sir; a man always makes himself greater as he increases his knowledge."

I censured some ludicrous fantastic dialogues between two coach-horses, and other such stuff, which Baretti had lately published. He joined with me, and said, "Nothing odd will do long. 'Tristram Shandy' did not last." I expressed a desire to be acquainted with a lady who had been much talked of, and universally celebrated for extraordinary address and insinuation.¹ JOHNSON. "Never believe extraordinary characters which you hear of people. Depend upon it, Sir, they are exaggerated. You do not see one man shoot a great deal higher than another." I mentioned Mr. Burke. JOHNSON. "Yes, Burke is an extraordinary man. His stream of mind is perpetual." It is very pleasing to me to record, that Johnson's high estimation of the talents of this gentleman was uniform from their early acquaintance. Sir Joshua Reynolds informs me, that when Mr. Burke was first elected a member of Parliament, and Sir John Hawkins expressed a wonder at his attaining a seat, Johnson said, "Now we who know Mr. Burke, know that he will be one of the first men in the country." And once, when Johnson was ill, and unable to exert himself as much as usual without fatigue, Mr. Burke having been mentioned, he said, "That fellow calls forth all my powers. Were I to see Burke now it would kill me." So much was he accustomed to consider conversation as a contest, and such was his notion of Burke as an opponent.

Next morning, Thursday, 21st March, we set out in a post-chaise to pursue our ramble. It was a delightful day, and we rode through

¹ Margaret Caroline Rudd, a woman who lived with one of the brothers Perreau, who were about this time executed (Jan. 17, 1776) for a forgery. Her fame "for extraordinary address and insinuation" was probably very unfounded; it arose from this: she betrayed her accomplices; and they, in return, charged her with being the real author of the forgery, and alleged that they were dupes and instruments in her hands; and, to support this allegation, they and their friends, who were numerous and respectable, exaggerated, to the highest degree, Mrs Rudd's supposed powers of address and fascination.—C.

Blenneim park. When I looked at the magnificent bridge built by John Duke of Marlborough, over a small rivulet, and recollected the epigram made ' upon it—

“ The lofty arch his high ambition shows,
The stream an emblem of his bounty flows ”

and saw that now, by the genius of Brown, a magnificent body of water was collected, I said, “ They have *drowned* the epigram.” I observed to him, while in the midst of the noble scene around us, “ You and I, Sir, have, I think, seen together the extremes of what can be seen in Britain—the wild rough island of Mull, and Blenneim park.”

We dined at an excellent inn at Chapelhouse, where he expatiated on the felicity of England in its taverns and inns, and triumphed over the French for not having, in any perfection, the tavern life. “ There is no private house,” said he, “ in which people can enjoy themselves so well, as at a capital tavern. Let there be ever so great plenty of good things, ever so much grandeur, ever so much elegance, ever so much desire that everybody should be easy ; in the nature of things it cannot be : there must always be some degree of care and anxiety. The master of the house is anxious to entertain his guests ; the guests are anxious to be agreeable to him ; and no man, but a very impudent dog indeed, can as freely command what is in another man’s house, as if it were his own. Whereas, at a tavern there is general freedom from anxiety. You are sure you are welcome : and the more noise you make, the more trouble you give, the more good things you call for, the welcomer you are. No servants will attend you with the alacrity which waiters do, who are incited by the prospect of an immediate reward in proportion as they please. No, Sir ; there is nothing which has yet been contrived by man, by which so much happiness is produced as by a good tavern or inn.”¹ He then repeated, with great emotion, Shenstone’s lines :

¹ By Dr. Evans.—O.

² Sir John Hawkins has preserved very few *memorabilia* of Johnson. There is, however, to be found in his bulky tome a very excellent one upon this subject. “ In contradiction to those who, having a wife and children, prefer domestic enjoyments to those which a tavern affords, I have heard him assert, *that a tavern chair was the throne of human felicity*. ‘ As

"Whoe'er has travell'd life's dull round,
Where'er his stages may have been,
May sigh to think he still has found
The warmest welcome at an inn."¹

My illustrious friend, I thought, did not sufficiently admire Shenstone. That ingenious and elegant gentleman's opinion of Johnson appears in one of his letters to Mr. Greaves, dated Feb. 9, 1760. "I have lately been reading one or two volumes of the Rambler; who, excepting against some few hardnesses in his manner, and the want of more examples to enliven, is one of the most nervous, most perspicuous, most concise, most harmonious prose writers I know. A learned diction improves by time."

In the afternoon, as we were driving rapidly along in the post-chaise, he said to me, "Life has not many things better than this."²

We stopped at Stratford-upon-Avon, and drank tea and coffee; and it pleased me to be with him upon the classic ground of Shakespeare's native place.

He spoke slightly of Dyer's "Fleece." "The subject, Sir, cannot be made poetical. How can a man write poetically of

soon," said he, "as I enter the door of a tavern, I experience an oblivion of care, and a freedom from solicitude: when I am seated, I find the master courteous, and the servants obsequious to my call; anxious to know and ready to supply my wants: wine there exhilarates my spirits, and prompts me to free conversation and an interchange of discourse with those whom I most love: I dogmatise and am contradicted, and in this conflict of opinion and sentiments I find delight."³

¹ We happened to lie this night at the inn at Henley, where Shenstone wrote these lines; which I give as they are found in the corrected edition of his works, published after his death. In Dodsley's collection the stanza ran thus:—

"Whoe'er has travell'd life's dull round,
Whate'er his *various tour* has been,
May sigh to think *how oft* he found
His warmest welcome at an inn."

² He loved, indeed, the very act of travelling, and I cannot tell how far one might have taken him in a carriage before he would have wished for refreshment. He was therefore in some respects an admirable companion on the road, as he piqued himself upon feeling no inconvenience, and on despising no accommodations. On the other hand, however, he expected no one else to feel any, and felt exceedingly inflamed with anger if any one complained of the rain, the sun, or the dust. "How," said he, "do other people bear them?" As for general uneasiness, or complaints of long confinement in a carriage, he considered all lamentations on their account as proofs of an empty head, and a tongue desirous to talk without materials of conversation. "A mill that goes without grist," said he, "is as good a companion as such creatures."—PROZEL.

serges and druggets? Yet you will hear many people talk to you gravely of that *excellent* poem, 'The Fleece.' Having talked of Grainger's "Sugar Cane," I mentioned to him Mr. Langton's having told me, that this poem, when read in manuscript at Sir Joshua Reynolds's, had made all the assembled wits burst into a laugh, when, after much blank-verse pomp, the poet began a new paragraph thus:—

"Now, Muse, let's sing of *rats*."

And what increased the ridicule was, that one of the company, who slyly overlooked the reader, perceived that the word had been originally *mice*, and had been altered to *rats*, as more dignified.¹

This passage does not appear in the printed work, Dr. Grainger, or some of his friends, it should seem, having become sensible that introducing even *rats*, in a grave poem, might be liable to banter. He, however, could not bring himself to relinquish the idea; for they are thus, in a still more ludicrous manner, periphrastically exhibited in his poem as it now stands:—

"Nor with less waste the whisker'd vermin race,
A countless clan, despoil the lowland cane."

Johnson said, that Dr. Grainger was an agreeable man; a man who would do any good that was in his power. His translation of Tibullus, he thought, was very well done; "The Sugar Cane, a Poem," did not please him;² for, he exclaimed, "What could he

¹ Such is this little laughable incident, which has been often related. Dr. Percy, the Bishop of Dromore, who was an intimate friend of Dr. Grainger, and has a particular regard for his memory, has communicated to me the following explanation:—

"The passage in question was originally not liable to such a perversion: for the author having occasion in that part of his work to mention the havoc made by rats and mice, had introduced the subject in a kind of mock-heroic, and a parody of Homer's *Battle of the Frogs-and-Mice*, invoking the muse of the old Grecian bard in an elegant and well-turned manner. In that state I had seen it; but afterwards, unknown to me and other friends, he had been persuaded, contrary to his own better judgment, to alter it, so as to produce the unlucky effect above mentioned."

The above was written by the Bishop when he had not the poem itself to recur to: and though the account given was true of it at one period, yet, as Dr. Grainger afterwards altered the passage in question, the remarks in the text do not now apply to the printed poem. The Bishop gives this character of Dr. Grainger:—"He was not only a man of genius and learning; but had many excellent virtues; being one of the most generous, friendly, and benevolent men I ever knew." Dr. Johnson said to me, "Percy, Sir, was angry with me for laughing at the Sugar-cane: for he had a mind to make a great thing of Grainger's rats."

² Yet Dr. Johnson sent a very friendly review of the "Sugar Cane" to the *London Chronicle* of July 5, 1764.—CHAMBERS.

make of a sugar cane? One might as well write the 'Parsley-bed, a Poem;' or 'The Cabbage-garden, a Poem.'" BOSWELL. "You must then *pickle* your cabbage with the *sal atticum*." JOHNSON. "You know there is already 'The Hop Garden, a Poem;' and I think, one could say a great deal about cabbage. The poem might begin with the advantages of civilized society over the rude state, exemplified by the Scotch, who had no cabbages till Oliver Cromwell's soldiers introduced them; and one might thus show how arts are propagated by conquest, as they were by the Roman arms." He seemed to be much diverted with the fertility of his own fancy.

I told him, that I heard Dr. Percy was writing the history of the wolf in Great Britain. JOHNSON. "The wolf, Sir; why the wolf? Why does he not write of the bear, which we had formerly? Nay, it is said that we had the beaver. Or why does he not write of the gray rat, the Hanover rat, as it is called, because it is said to have come into this country about the time that the family of Hanover came? I should like to see '*The History of the Gray Rat, by Thomas Percy, D.D., Chaplain in Ordinary to His Majesty*'" (laughing immoderately). BOSWELL. "I am afraid a court chaplain could not decently write of the gray rat." JOHNSON. "Sir, he need not give it the name of the Hanover rat." Thus could he indulge a luxuriant sportive imagination, when talking of a friend whom he loved and esteemed.

He mentioned to me the singular history of an ingenious acquaintance. "He had practised physic in various situations with no great emolument. A West India gentleman, whom he delighted by his conversation, gave him a bond for a handsome annuity during his life, on the condition of his accompanying him to the West Indies, and living with him there for two years. He accordingly embarked with the gentleman; but upon the voyage fell in love with a young woman who happened to be one of the passengers, and married the wench. From the imprudence of his disposition he quarrelled with the gentleman, and declared he would have no connexion with him. So he forfeited the annuity. He settled as a physician in one of the Leeward Islands. A man was sent out to him merely to compound his medicines. This fellow set up as a rival to him in his practice of physic, and got so much the better of

him in the opinion of the people of the island, that he carried away all the business, upon which he returned to England, and soon after died."

On Friday, 22d March, having set out early from Henley, where we had lain the preceding night, we arrived at Birmingham about nine o'clock, and after breakfast went to call on his old schoolfellow, Mr. Hector. A very stupid maid, who opened the door, told us that "her master was gone out ; he was gone to the country ; she could not tell when he would return." In short, she gave us a miserable reception ; and Johnson observed, "She would have behaved no better to people who wanted him in the way of his profession." He said to her, "My name is Johnson ; tell him I called. Will you remember the name ?" She answered with rustic simplicity, in the Warwickshire pronunciation, "I don't understand you, Sir." "Blockhead," said he, "I'll write." I never heard the word *blockhead* applied to a woman before, though I do not see why it should not, when there is evident occasion for it. He, however, made another attempt to make her understand him, and roared loud in her ear, "*Johnson*," and then she caught the sound.

We next called on Mr. Lloyd, one of the people called quakers. He too was not at home, but Mrs. Lloyd was, and received us courteously, and asked us to dinner. Johnson said to me, "After the uncertainty of all human things at Hector's, this invitation came very well. We walked about the town, and he was pleased to see it increasing.

I talked of legitimization by subsequent marriage, which obtained in the Roman law, and still obtains in the law of Scotland. JOHNSON. "I think it a bad thing, because the chastity of women being of the utmost importance, as all property depends upon it, they who forfeit it should not have any possibility of being restored to good charac-

¹ My worthy friend Mr. Langton, to whom I am under innumerable obligations in the course of my *Johnsonian History*, has furnished me with a droll illustration of this question. An honest carpenter, after giving some anecdote, in his presence, of the ill treatment which he had received from a clergyman's wife, who was a noted termagant, and whom he accused of unjust dealing in some transaction with him, added, "I took care to let her know what I thought of her." And being asked, "What did you say ?" answered, "I told her she was a scoundrel."

ter ; nor should the children, by an illicit connection, attain the full right of lawful children, by the posterior consent of the offending parties." His opinion upon this subject deserves consideration. Upon his principle there may at times be a hardship, and seemingly a strange one, upon individuals ; but the general good of society is better secured. And, after all, it is unreasonable in an individual to repine that he has not the advantage of a state which is made different from his own, by the social institution under which he is born. A woman does not complain that her brother who is younger than her gets their common father's estate. Why then should a natural son complain that a younger brother, by the same parents lawfully begotten, gets it ? The operation of law is similar in both cases. Besides, an illegitimate son, who has a younger legitimate brother by the same father and mother, has no stronger claim to the father's estate, than if that legitimate brother had only the same father, from whom alone the estate descends.

Mr. Lloyd joined us in the street ; and in a little while we met *friend Hector*, as Mr. Lloyd called him. It gave me pleasure to observe the joy which Johnson and he expressed on seeing each other again. Mr. Lloyd and I left them together, while he obligingly showed me some of the manufactures of this very curious assemblage of artificers. We all met at dinner at Mr. Lloyd's, where we were entertained with great hospitality. Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd had been married the same year with their majesties, and, like them, had been blessed with a numerous family of fine children, their numbers being exactly the same. Johnson said, "Marriage is the best state for man in general ; and every man is a worse man, in proportion as he is unfit for the married state."

I have always loved the simplicity of manners, and the spiritual-mindedness, of the quakers ; and talking with Mr. Lloyd, I observed, that the essential part of religion was piety, a devout intercourse with the Divinity ; and that many a man was a quaker without knowing it.

As Dr Johnson had said to me in the morning while we walked together, that he liked individuals among the quakers, but not the sect ; when we were at Mr. Lloyd's, I kept clear of introducing any questions concerning the peculiarities of their faith. But I having

asked to look at Baskerville's edition of "Barclay's Apology," Johnson laid hold of it ; and the chapter on baptism happening to open, Johnson remarked, "He says there is neither precept nor practice for baptism in the scriptures ; that is false." Here was he the aggressor, by no means in a gentle manner ; and the good quakers had the advantage of him ; for he had read negligently, and had not observed that Barclay speaks of *infant* baptism ; which they calmly made him perceive. Mr. Lloyd, however, was in a great mistake ; for when insisting that the rite of baptism by water was to cease, when the *spiritual* administration of Christ began, he maintained that John the Baptist said, "*My baptism* shall decrease, but *his* shall increase." Whereas the words are, "*He* must increase, but *I* must decrease" [ch. iii. v. 30].

One of them having objected to the "observance of days, and months, and years," Johnson answered, "The church does not superstitiously observe days, merely as days, but as memorials of important facts. Christmas might be kept as well upon one day of the year as another ; but there should be a stated day for commemorating the birth of our Saviour, because there is danger that what may be done on any day will be neglected."

He said to me at another time, "Sir, the holidays observed by our church are of great use to religion." There can be no doubt of this in a limited sense, I mean if the number of such consecrated portions of time be not too extensive. The excellent Mr. Nelson's "Festivals and Fasts," which has, I understand, the greatest sale of any book ever printed in England, except the Bible, is a most valuable help to devotion : and in addition to it I would recommend two sermons on the same subject, by Mr. Pott, Archdeacon of St. Alban's, equally distinguished for piety and elegance. I am sorry to have it to say, that Scotland is the only Christian country, catholic or protestant, where the great events of our religion are not solemnly commemorated by its ecclesiastical establishment, on days set apart for the purpose.

Mr. Hector was so good as to accompany me to see the great works of Mr. Boulton, at a place which he has called Soho, about two miles from Birmingham, which the very ingenious proprietor showed me himself to the best advantage. I wished Johnson had

been with us ; for it was a scene which I should have been glad to contemplate by his light. The vastness and the contrivance of some of the machinery would have " matched his mighty mind." I shall never forget Mr. Boulton's expression to me, " I sell here, Sir, what all the world desires to have—POWER." He had about seven hundred people at work. I contemplated him as an *iron chieftain*, and he seemed to be a father to his tribe. One of them came to him, complaining grievously of his landlord for having distrained his goods. " Your landlord is in the right, Smith (said Boulton). But I'll tell you what : find you a friend who will lay down one half of your rent, and I'll lay down the other half ; and you shall have your goods again."

From Mr. Hector I now learnt many particulars of Dr. Johnson's early life, which, with others that he gave me at different times since, have contributed to the formation of this work.

Dr. Johnson said to me in the morning, " You will see, Sir, at Mr. Hector's, his sister, Mrs. Careless, a clergyman's widow. She was the first woman with whom I was in love. It dropped out of my head imperceptibly ; but she and I shall always have a kindness for each other." He laughed at the notion that a man can never be really in love but once, and considered it as a mere romantic fancy.

On our return from Mr. Boulton's, Mr. Hector took me to his house, where we found Johnson sitting placidly at tea, with his *first love* ; who, though now advanced in years, was a genteel woman, very agreeable and well-bred.

Johnson lamented to Mr. Hector the state of one of their school-fellows, Mr. Charles Congreve, a clergyman, which he thus described : " He obtained, I believe, considerable preferment in Ireland, but now lives in London, quite as a valetudinarian, afraid to go into any house but his own. He takes a short airing in his post-chaise every day. He has an elderly woman, whom he calls cousin, who lives with him, and jogs his elbow when his glass has stood too long empty, and encourages him in drinking, in which he is very willing to be encouraged ; not that he gets drunk, for he is a very pious man, but he is always muddy. He confesses to one bottle of port every day, and he probably drinks more. He is quite unsocial ; his

conversation is quite monosyllabical ; and when, at my last visit, I asked him what o'clock it was ? that signal of my departure had so pleasing an effect on him, that he sprung up to look at his watch, like a greyhound bounding at a hare." When Johnson took leave of Mr. Hector, he said, "Don't grow like Congreve ; nor let me grow like him, when you are near me."

When he again talked of Mrs. Careless to-night, he seemed to have his affection revived ; for he said, "If I had married her, it might have been as happy for me." BOSWELL. "Pray, Sir, do you not suppose that there are fifty women in the world, with any one of whom a man may be as happy, as with any one woman in particular?" JOHNSON. "Ay, Sir, fifty thousand." BOSWELL. "Then, Sir, you are not of opinion with some who imagine that certain men and certain women are made for each other ; and that they cannot be happy if they miss their counterparts." JOHNSON. "To be sure not, Sir. I believe marriages would in general be as happy, and often more so, if they were all made by the lord chancellor, upon a due consideration of the characters and circumstances, without the parties having any choice in the matter.

I wished to have staid at Birmingham to-night, to have talked more with Mr. Hector ; but my friend was impatient to reach his native city ; so we drove on that stage in the dark, and were long pensive and silent. When we came within the focus of the Lichfield lamps, "Now," said he, "we are getting out of a state of death." We put up at the Three Crowns, not one of the great inns, but a good old-fashioned one, which was kept by Mr. Wilkins, and was the very next house to that in which Johnson was born and brought up, and which was still his own property.¹ We had a comfortable supper, and got into high spirits. I felt all my toryism glow in this old capital of Staffordshire. I could have offered incense *genio loci* ; and I indulged in libations of that ale, which Boniface, in "The Beaux Stratagem," recommends with such an eloquent jollity.

¹ I went through the house where my illustrious friend was born, with a reverence with which it doubtless will long be visited. An engraved view of it, with the adjacent buildings, is in the "Gentleman's Magazine" for February, 1785.

Next morning he introduced me to Mrs. Lucy Porter, his step-daughter. She was now an old maid, with much simplicity of manner. She had never been in London. Her brother, a captain in the navy, had left her a fortune of ten thousand pounds; about a third of which she had laid out in building a stately house, and making a handsome garden, in an elevated situation in Lichfield. Johnson, when here by himself, used to live at her house. She revered him, and he had a parental tenderness for her.

We then visited Mr. Peter Garrick, who had that morning received a letter from his brother David, announcing our coming to Lichfield. He was engaged to dinner, but asked us to tea, and to sleep at his house. Johnson, however, would not quit his old acquaintance Wilkins of the Three Crowns. The family likeness of the Garricks was very striking; and Johnson thought that David's vivacity was not so peculiar to himself as was supposed. "Sir," said he, "I don't know but if Peter had cultivated all the arts of gaiety as much as David has done, he might have been as brisk and lively. Depend upon it, Sir, vivacity is much an art, and depends greatly on habit." I believe there is a good deal of truth in this, notwithstanding a ludicrous story told me by a lady abroad of a heavy German baron, who had lived much with the young English at Geneva, and was ambitious to be as lively as they; with which view, he, with assiduous exertion, was jumping over the tables and chairs in his lodgings; and when the people of the house ran in and asked, with surprise, what was the matter, he answered, "*Sh' apprens t'être fif.*"

We dined at our inn, and had with us a Mr. Jackson,¹ one of Johnson's schoolfellows, whom he treated with much kindness, though he seemed to be a low man, dull and untaught. He had a coarse gray coat, black waistcoat, greasy leather breeches, and a yellow uncurled wig; and his countenance had the ruddiness which betokens one who is in no haste to "leave his can." He drank only ale. He had tried to be a cuttler at Birmingham, but had not

¹ This person's name was Henry. The "scheme for dressing leather" renders it probable that he was related to the Thomas Jackson, mentioned by Mr. Boswell as a *servant*, and by Mrs. Piozzi as a *workman* (in truth, probably, a *partner*) of old Mr. Johnson's, about the time when the failure of some scheme for *dressing leather* or parchment accelerated his bankruptcy.--C.

succeeded : and now he lived poorly at home, and had some scheme of dressing leather in a better manner than common ; to his indistinct account of which, Dr. Johnson listened with patient attention, that he might assist him with his advice. Here was an instance of genuine humanity and real kindness in this great man, who has been most unjustly represented as altogether harsh and destitute of tenderness. A thousand such instances might have been recorded in the course of his long life ; though that his temper was warm and hasty, and his manner often rough, cannot be denied.

I saw here, for the first time, *oat ale* ; and oat cakes, not hard as in Scotland, but soft like a Yorkshire cake, were served at breakfast. It was pleasant to me to find, that "*oats*," the "*food of horses*," were so much used as the *food of the people* in Dr. Johnson's own town. He expatiated in praise of Lichfield and its inhabitants, who, he said, were "the most sober, decent people in England, the genteeldest in proportion to their wealth, and spoke the purest English." I doubted as to the last article of this eulogy ; for they had several provincial sounds ; as, *there* pronounced like *fear*, instead of like *fair* ; *once* pronounced *woonse*, instead of *wunse* or *wonse*. Johnson himself never got entirely free of those provincial accents. Garrick sometimes used to take him off, squeezing a lemon into a punch-bowl, with uncouth gesticulations, looking round the company and calling out, "Who's for *poonsh* ?" ¹

Very little business appeared to be going forward in Lichfield. I found, however, two strange manufactures for so inland a place, sail-cloth and streamers for ships ; and I observed them making some saddle-cloths, and dressing sheep-skins ; but upon the whole, the busy hand of industry seemed to be quite slackened. "Surely, Sir," said I, "you are an idle set of people." "Sir," said Johnson, "we are a city of philosophers ; we work with our heads, and make the boobies of Birmingham work for us with their hands." There was at this time a company of players performing at Lichfield. The manager, Mr. Stanton, sent his compliments, and begged leave to

¹ Garrick himself, like the Lichfieldians, always said, *shupreme*, *shuperior*.—BURNBY. This is still the vulgar pronunciation of Ireland, where the pronunciation of the English language by those who have not expatriated is doubtless that which generally prevailed in England in the time of Queen Elizabeth.—M. "*Shupreme*" and "*shuperior*" are incorrect—yet every one says "*shure*" and "*shugar*" for "*sure*" and "*sugar*."—O.

wait on Dr. Johnson. Johnson received him very courteously, and he drank a glass of wine with us. He was a plain, decent, well-behaved man, and expressed his gratitude to Dr. Johnson for having once got him permission from Dr. Taylor at Ashbourne to play there upon moderate terms. Garrick's name was soon introduced. JOHNSON. "Garrick's conversation is gay and grotesque. It is a dish of all sorts, but all good things. There is no solid meat in it : there is a want of sentiment in it. Not but that he has sentiment sometimes, and sentiment too very powerful and very pleasing : but it has not its full proportion in his conversation."

When we were by ourselves he told me, "Forty years ago, Sir, I was in love with an actress here, Mrs. Emmet, who acted Flora, in 'Hob in a Well.'" What merit this lady had as an actress, or what was her figure, or her manner, I have not been informed; but, if we may believe Mr. Garrick, his old master's taste in theatrical merit was by no means refined; he was not an *elegans formarum spectator*. Garrick used to tell, that Johnson said of an actor, who played Sir Harry Wildair at Lichfield, "There is a courtly vivacity about the fellow;" when, in fact, according to Garrick's account, "he was the most vulgar ruffian that ever went upon boards."

We had promised Mr. Stanton to be at his theatre on Monday. Dr. Johnson jocularly proposed to me to write a prologue for the occasion: "A Prologue, by James Boswell, Esqr. from the Hebrides." I was really inclined to take the hint. Methought, "Prologue, spoken before Dr. Samuel Johnson, at Lichfield, 1776." would have sounded as well as "Prologue, spoken before the Duke of York at Oxford," in Charles the Second's time. Much might have been said of what Lichfield had done for Shakspeare, by producing Johnson and Garrick. But I found he was adverse to it.

We went and viewed the museum of Mr. Richard Green, apothecary here, who told me he was proud of being a relation of Dr. Johnson's. It was, truly, a wonderful collection, both of antiquities and natural curiosities, and ingenious works of art. He had all the articles accurately arranged, with their names upon labels, printed at his own little press; and on the staircase leading to it was a board, with the names of contributors marked in gold letters. A printed catalogue of the collection was to be had at a book

seller's. Johnson expressed his admiration of the activity and diligence and good fortune of Mr. Green, in getting together, in his situation, so great a variety of things ; and Mr. Green told me that Johnson once said to him, " Sir, I should as soon have thought of building a man of war, as of collecting such a museum." Mr. Green's obliging alacrity in showing it was very pleasing. His engraved portrait, with which he has favoured me, has a motto truly characteristic of his disposition, "*Nemo sibi vivat.*"

A physician being mentioned who had lost his practice, because his whimsically changing his religion had made people distrustful of him, I maintained that this was unreasonable, as religion is unconnected with medical skill. JOHNSON. " Sir, it is not unreasonable ; for when people see a man absurd in what they understand, they may conclude the same of him in what they do not understand. If a physician were to take to eating of horseflesh, nobody would employ him ; though one may eat horseflesh, and be a very skilful physician. If a man were educated in an absurd religion, his continuing to profess it would not hurt him, though his changing to it would.¹

We drank tea and coffee at Mr. Peter Garrick's, where was Mrs. Aston, one of the maiden sisters of Mrs. Walmesley, wife of Johnson's first friend, and sister also of the lady of whom Johnson used to speak with the warmest admiration, by the name of Molly Aston, who was afterwards married to Captain Brodie of the navy.

¹ Fothergill, a quaker, and Schomberg, a Jew, had the greatest practice of any two physicians of their time.—BURNBY.

CHAPTER X.

1776.

Lichfield—Peter Garrick—Death of Mr. Thrale's only Son—Shakspeare's Mulberry Tree—Lord Bute—Marriage—Questioning—Sir Fletcher Norton—Ashbourne—Dr. Taylor—"Old Men putting themselves to nurse"—"Il Palmerino d'Inghilterra"—Ingratitude—Mr. Wedderburne—"Marrying for Love"—Dr. James—Melancholy—Captain Cook—Omai—Character of a Soldier—Good humour of ancient Philosophers—Public Schools—English Universities—Libels on the Dead.

ON Sunday, March 24, we breakfasted with Mrs. Cobb, a widow lady, who lived in an agreeable sequestered place close by the town, called the Friary, it having been formerly a religious house. She and her niece, Miss Adey, were great admirers of Dr. Johnson; and he behaved to them with a kindness and easy pleasantry, such as we see between old and intimate acquaintance. He accompanied Mrs. Cobb to St. Mary's Church, and I went to the cathedral, where I was very much delighted with the music, finding it to be peculiarly solemn, and accordant with the words of the service.

We dined at Mr. Peter Garrick's, who was in a very lively humour, and verified Johnson's saying, that if he had cultivated gaiety as much as his brother David, he might have equally excelled in it. He was to-day quite a London narrator, telling us a variety of anecdotes with that earnestness and attempt at mimicry which we usually find in the wits of the metropolis. Dr. Johnson went with me to the cathedral in the afternoon. It was grand and pleasing to contemplate this illustrious writer, now full of fame, worshipping in "the solemn temple" of his native city.

I returned to tea and coffee at Mr. Peter Garrick's, and then found Dr. Johnson at the Reverend Mr. Seward's, canon residentiary, who inhabited the bishop's palace, in which Mr. Walmesley lived, and which had been the scene of many happy hours in Johnson's early life. Mr. Seward had, with ecclesiastic hospitality and politeness, asked me in the morning, merely as a stranger, to dine with

him; and in the afternoon, when I was introduced to him, he asked Dr. Johnson and me to spend the evening, and sup with him. He was a genteel, well-bred, dignified clergyman, had travelled with Lord Charles Fitzroy, uncle of the present Duke of Grafton, who died when abroad, and he had lived much in the great world. He was an ingenious and literary man, had published an edition of Beaumont and Fletcher, and written verses in Dodsley's collection. His lady was the daughter of Mr. Hunter, Johnson's first school-master. And now, for the first time, I had the pleasure of seeing his celebrated daughter, Miss Anna Seward, to whom I have since been indebted for many civilities, as well as some obliging communications concerning Johnson.

Mr. Seward mentioned to us the observations which he had made upon the strata of earth in volcanoes, from which it appeared, that they were so very different in depth at different periods, that no calculation whatever could be made as to the time required for their formation. This fully refuted an anti-mosaical remark introduced into Captain Brydone's entertaining tour,¹ I hope heedlessly, from a kind of vanity which is too common in those who have not sufficiently studied the most important of all subjects. Dr. Johnson, indeed, had said before, independent of this observation, "Shall all the accumulated evidence of the history of the world—shall the authority of what is unquestionably the most ancient writing, be overturned by an uncertain remark such as this?"

On Monday, March 25, we breakfasted at Mrs. Lucy Porter's. Johnson had sent an express to Dr. Taylor's, acquainting him of our being at Lichfield, and Taylor had returned an answer that his post-chaise should come for us this day. While we sat at breakfast, Dr. Johnson received a letter by the post, which seemed to agitate him very much. When he had read it, he exclaimed, "One of the most dreadful things that has happened in my time." The phrase *my time*, like the word *age*, is usually understood to refer to an event of a public or general nature. I imagined something like an assassination of the king—like a gunpowder plot carried into execution—or like another fire of London. When asked, "What is it, Sir?" he answered, "Mr. Thrale has lost his only son!" This

¹ In Sicily and Malta.—C.

was, no doubt, a very great affliction to Mr. and Mrs. Thrale, which their friends would consider accordingly; but from the manner in which the intelligence of it was communicated by Johnson, it appeared for the moment to be comparatively small. I, however, soon felt a sincere concern, and was curious to observe how Dr. Johnson would be affected. He said, "This is a total extinction to their family, as much as if they were sold into captivity." Upon my mentioning that Mr. Thrale had daughters, who might inherit his wealth; "Daughters," said Johnson, warmly, "he'll no more value his daughters than—" I was going to speak. "Sir," said he, "don't you know how you yourself think? Sir, he wishes to propagate his name." In short, I saw male succession strong in his mind, even where there was no name, no family of any long standing. I said, it was lucky he was not present when this misfortune happened. JOHNSON. "It is lucky for *me*. People in distress never think you feel enough." BOSWELL. "And, Sir, they will have the hope of seeing you, which will be a relief in the meantime; and when you get to them, the pain will be so far abated, that they will be capable of being consoled by you, which, in the first violence of it, I believe, would not be the case." JOHNSON. "No, Sir; violent pain of mind, like violent pain of body, *must* be severely felt." BOSWELL. "I own, Sir, I have not so much feeling for the distress of others, as some people have, or pretend to have; but I know this, that I would do all in my power to relieve them." JOHNSON. "Sir, it is affectation to pretend to feel the distress of others as much as they do themselves. It is equally so, as if one should pretend to feel as much pain while a friend's leg is cutting off, as he does. No, Sir; you have expressed the rational and just nature of sympathy. I would have gone to the extremity of the earth to have preserved this boy."

He was soon quite calm. The letter was from Mr. Thrale's clerk, and concluded, "I need not say how much they wish to see you in London." He said, "We shall hasten back from Taylor's."

Mrs. Lucy Porter and some other ladies of the place talked a great deal of him when he was out of the room, not only with veneration but affection. It pleased me to find that he was so much *beloved* in his native city.

Mrs. Aston, whom I had seen the preceding night, and her sister, Mrs. Gastrel, a widow lady, had each a house, and garden, and pleasure-grounds, prettily situated upon Stowhill, a gentle eminence, adjoining to Lichfield. Johnson walked away to dinner there, leaving me by myself without any apology; I wondered at this want of that facility of manners, from which a man has no difficulty in carrying a friend to a house where he is intimate; I felt it very unpleasant to be thus left in solitude in a country town, where I was an entire stranger, and began to think myself unkindly deserted; but I was soon relieved, and convinced that my friend, instead of being deficient in delicacy, had conducted the matter with perfect propriety, for I received the following note in his handwriting :

"Mrs. Gastrel, at the lower house on Stowhill, desires Mr. Boswell's company to dinner at two."

I accepted of the invitation, and had here another proof how amiable his character was in the opinion of those who knew him best. I was not informed, till afterwards, that Mrs. Gastrel's husband was the clergyman who, while he lived at Stratford-upon-Avon, where he was proprietor of Shakspeare's garden, with gothic barbarity cut down his mulberry-tree,¹ and, as Dr. Johnson told me, did it to vex his neighbours. His lady, I have reason to believe, on the same authority, participated in the guilt of what the enthusiasts of our immortal bard deem almost a species of sacrilege.

After dinner Dr. Johnson wrote a letter to Mrs. Thrale, on the death of her son :—

LETTER 244.

TO MRS. THRALE.

"Lichfield, March 25, 1778.

"DEAR MADAM,—This letter will not, I hope, reach you many days before me; in a distress which can be so little relieved, nothing remains for a friend but to come and partake it.

"Poor, dear, sweet little boy! When I read the letter this day to Mrs. Aston, she said, 'Such a death is the next to translation.' Yet, however I may convince myself of this, the tears are in my eyes, and yet I could not love

¹ See an accurate and animated statement of Mr. Gastrel's barbarity, by Mr. Malone, in a note on "Some Account of the Life of William Shakspeare," prefixed to his admirable edition of that poet's works.

him as you loved him, nor reckon upon him for a future comfort as you and his father reckoned upon him.

. "He is gone, and we are going! We could not have enjoyed him long, and shall not long be separated from him. He has probably escaped many such pangs as you are now feeling.

"Nothing remains, but that with humble confidence we resign ourselves to Almighty Goodness, and fall down, without irreverent murmurs, before the Sovereign Distributor of Good and Evil, with hope that though sorrow endureth for a night, yet joy may come in the morning.

"I have known you, Madam, too long to think that you want any arguments for submission to the Supreme Will; nor can my consolation have any effect, but that of showing that I wish to comfort you. What can be done you must do for yourself. Remember, first, that your child is happy; and then, that he is safe, not only from the ills of this world, but from those more formidable dangers which extend their mischief to eternity. You have brought into the world a rational being; have seen him happy during the little life that has been granted to him; and can have no doubt but that his happiness is now.

"When you have obtained by prayer such tranquillity as nature will admit, force your attention, as you can, upon your accustomed duties and accustomed entertainments. You can do no more for our dear boy, but you must not therefore think less on those whom your attention may make fitter for the place to which he is gone. I am, dearest, dearest Madam, your most affectionate humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

I said this loss would be very distressing to Mrs. Thrale, but she would soon forget it, as she had so many things to think of. JOHNSON. "No, Sir, Thrale will forget it first. *She* has many things that *she may* think of. *He* has many things that he *must* think of." This was a very just remark upon the different effects of those light pursuits which occupy a vacant and easy mind, and those serious engagements which arrest attention, and keep us from brooding over grief.

He observed of Lord Bute, "It was said of Augustus, that it would have been better for Rome that he had never been born, or had never died. So it would have been better for this nation if Lord Bute had never been minister, or had never resigned."

In the evening we went to the Town-hall, which was converted into a temporary theatre, and saw "Theodosius," with "The Stratford Jubilee." I was happy to see Dr. Johnson sitting in a con-

spicuous part of the pit, and receiving affectionate homage from all his acquaintance. We were quite gay and merry. I afterwards mentioned to him that I condemned myself for being so, when poor Mr. and Mrs. Thrale were in such distress. JOHNSON. "You are wrong, Sir; twenty years hence Mr. and Mrs. Thrale will not suffer much pain from the death of their son. Now, Sir, you are to consider, that distance of place, as well as distance of time, operates upon the human feelings. I would not have you be gay in the presence of the distressed, because it would shock them; but you may be gay at a distance. Pain for the loss of a friend, or of a relation, whom we love, is occasioned by the want which we feel. In time the vacuity is filled with something else; or sometimes the vacuity closes up of itself."

Mr. Seward and Mr. Pearson,¹ another clergyman here, supped with us at our inn, and after they left us, we sat up late as we used to do in London.

Here I shall record some fragments of my friend's conversation during this jaunt.

"Marriage, Sir, is much more necessary to a man than to a woman : for he is much less able to supply himself with domestic comforts. You will recollect my saying to some ladies the other day, that I had often wondered why young women should marry, as they have so much more freedom, and so much more attention paid to them while unmarried, than when married. I indeed did not mention the *strong* reason for their marrying—the *mechanical* reason." BOSWELL. "Why, that is a strong one. But does not imagination make it much more important than it is in reality? Is it not, to a certain degree, a delusion in us as well as in women?" JOHNSON. "Why yes, Sir; but it is a delusion that is always beginning again." BOSWELL. "I don't know but there is upon the whole more misery than happiness produced by that passion." JOHNSON. "I don't think so, Sir."

¹ This was the gentleman whose lady inherited Miss Porter's property, and has contributed so many of her manuscripts to this edition. It was to him that Miss Porter addressed, in the presence of Dr. Johnson, that two-edged reproof, which Dr. Johnson repeated to Mrs. Piozzi. Mr. Pearson having opposed Miss Porter in some argument, she was offended, and exclaimed, "Mr. Pearson, you are just like Dr. Johnson—you contradict every word one speaks."—*Piozzi*, p. 172.—C.

"Never speak of a man in his own presence. It is always indelicate, and may be offensive."

"Questioning is not the mode of conversation among gentlemen. It is assuming a superiority, and it is particularly wrong to question a man concerning himself. There may be parts of his former life which he may not wish to be made known to other persons, or even brought to his own recollection."

"A man should be careful never to tell tales of himself to his own disadvantage. People may be amused and laugh at the time, but they will be remembered, and brought out against him upon some subsequent occasion."

"Much may be done if a man puts his whole mind to a particular object. By doing so, Norton¹ has made himself the great lawyer that he is allowed to be."

I mentioned an acquaintance of mine, a sectary, who was a very religious man, who not only attended regularly on public worship with those of his communion, but made a particular study of the Scriptures, and even wrote a commentary on some parts of them, yet was known to be very licentious in indulging himself with women; maintaining that men are to be saved by faith alone, and that the Christian religion had not prescribed any fixed rule for the intercourse between the sexes. JOHNSON. "Sir, there is no trusting to that crazy piety."

I observed that it was strange how well Scotchmen were known to one another in their own country, though born in very distant counties; for we do not find that the gentlemen of neighbouring counties in England are mutually known to each other. JOHNSON, with his usual acuteness, at once saw and explained the reason of this; "Why, Sir, you have Edinburgh, where the gentlemen from all your counties meet, and which is not so large but they are all known. There is no such common place of collection in England, except London, where, from its great size and diffusion, many of those who reside in contiguous counties of England may long remain unknown to each other."

On Tuesday, March 26, there came for us an equipage properly

¹ Sir Fletcher Norton, afterward Speaker of the House of Commons, and in 1792 created Baron Grantly.—M.

sited to a wealthy, well-beneficed clergyman : Dr. Taylor's large roomy post-chaise, drawn by four stout plump horses, and driven by two steady jolly postilions, which conveyed us to Ashbourne; where I found my friend's schoolfellow living upon an establishment perfectly corresponding with his substantial creditable equipage : his house, garden, pleasure-ground, table, in short everything good, and no scantiness appearing. Every man should form such a plan of living as he can execute completely. Let him not draw an outline wider than he can fill up. I have seen many skeletons of show and magnificence which excite at once ridicule and pity. Dr. Taylor had a good estate of his own, and good preferment in the church, being a prebendary of Westminster, and rector of Bosworth. He was a diligent justice of the peace, and presided over the town of Ashbourne, to the inhabitants of which I was told he was very liberal ; and as a proof of this it was mentioned to me, he had the preceding winter distributed two hundred pounds among such of them as stood in need of his assistance. He had consequently considerable political interest in the county of Derby, which he employed to support the Devonshire family ; for, though the schoolfellow and friend of Johnson, he was a Whig. I could not perceive in his character much congeniality c.^t any sort with that of Johnson, who, however, said to me, " Sir, he has a very strong understanding." His size, and figure, and countenance, and manner were that of a hearty English squire, with the parson super-induced : and I took particular notice of his upper-servant, Mr. Peters, a decent grave man, in purple clothes, and a large white wig, like the butler or *major-domo* of a bishop.

Dr. Johnson and Dr. Taylor met with great cordiality; and Johnson soon gave him the same sad account of their schoolfellow, Congreve, that he had given to Mr. Hector ; adding a remark of such moment to the rational conduct of man in the decline of life, that it deserves to be imprinted upon every mind: "*There is nothing against which an old man should be so much upon his guard as putting himself to nurse.*" Innumerable have been the melancholy instances of men once distinguished for firmness, resolution and spirit, who in their latter days have been governed like children, by interested female artifice.

Dr. Taylor commended a physician ¹ who was known to him and Dr. Johnson, and said, "I fight many battles for him, as many people in the country dislike him." JOHNSON. "But you should consider, Sir, that by every one of your victories he is a loser; for every man of whom you get the better will be very angry, and resolve not to employ him; whereas if people get the better of you in argument about him, they'll think, 'We'll send for Dr. [Butter] nevertheless.'" This was an observation deep and sure in human nature.

Next day we talked of a book ² in which an eminent judge was arraigned before the bar of the public, as having pronounced an unjust decision in a great cause. Dr. Johnson maintained that this publication would not give any uneasiness to the judge. "For," said he, "either he acted honestly, or he meant to do injustice. If he acted honestly, his own conscience will protect him; if he meant to do injustice, he will be glad to see the man who attacks him so much vexed."

Next day, as Dr. Johnson had acquainted Dr. Taylor of the reason for his returning speedily to London, it was resolved that we should set out after dinner. A few of Dr. Taylor's neighbours were his guests that day.

Dr. Johnson talked with approbation of one who had attained to the state of the philosophical wise man, that is, to have no want of anything. "Then, Sir," said I, "the savage is a wise man." "Sir," said he, "I do not mean simply being without,—but not having a want." I maintained, against this proposition, that it was better to have fine clothes, for instance, than not to feel the want of them. JOHNSON. "No, Sir; fine clothes are good only as they supply the want of other means of procuring respect. Was Charles the Twelfth, think you, less respected for his coarse blue coat and black stock? And you find the King of Prussia dresses plain, because the dignity of his character is sufficient." I here brought myself into a scrape, for I heedlessly said, "Would not *you*, Sir, be the better for velvet embroidery?" JOHNSON. "Sir, you put an end to all argument when you introduce your opponent himself. Have you

¹ Dr. Butter, who afterwards came to practise in London, and attended Johnson in his last illness.—O.

² Andrew Stuart's Letters to Lord Mansfield on the Douglas Cause.—O.

no better manners? There is *your want*.”¹ I apologised by saying I had mentioned him as an instance of one who wanted as little as any man in the world, and yet, perhaps, might receive some additional lustre from dress.

Having left Ashbourne in the evening, we stopped to change horses at Derby, and availed ourselves of a moment to enjoy the conversation of my countryman, Dr. Butter, then physician there. He was in great indignation because Lord Mountstuart’s bill for a Scotch militia had been lost. Dr. Johnson was as violent against it. “I am glad,” said he, “that parliament has had the spirit to throw it out. You wanted to take advantage of the timidity of our scoundrels” (meaning, I suppose, the ministry). It may be observed, that he used the epithet *scoundrel*, very commonly, not quite in the sense in which it is generally understood, but as a strong term of disapprobation;² as when he abruptly answered Mrs. Thrale, who had asked him how he did, “Ready to become a scoundrel, Madam; with a little more spoiling you will, I think, make me a complete rascal;” he meant, easy to become a capricious and self-indulgent valetudinarian; a character for which I have heard him express great disgust.³

Johnson had with him upon this jaunt *Il Palmerino d’Inghilterra*,⁴ a romance praised by Cervantes; but did not like it much. He said, he read it for the language, by way of preparation for his Italian expedition.⁴ We lay this night at Loughborough.

On Thursday, March 28, we pursued our journey. I mentioned that old Mr. Sheridan complained of the ingratitude of Mr. Wed-

¹ The want seems, on this occasion, to have been common to *both*.—C.

² “It is so very difficult,” he said, on another occasion, to Mrs. Piozzi, “for a sick man not to be a scoundrel.” He used to say that “a man was a *scoundrel* who was afraid of any thing;” and it may be here observed, that *scoundrel* seems to have been a favourite word of his. In his Dictionary, he defined *knave*, a scoundrel; *loon*, a scoundrel; *lout*, a scoundrel; *pothoon*, a scoundrel; *meatup*, a scoundrel; *rascal*, a scoundrel; and *scoundrel* itself he defines a *mean rascal*; a *low petty villain*.—C.

³ Nothing more certainly offended Dr. Johnson than the idea of a man’s mental faculties decaying by time. “It is not true, Sir,” would he say: “what a man could once do, he would always do, unless, indeed, by dint of vicious indolence, and compliance with the nephews and nieces who crowd round an old fellow, and help to tuck him in, till he, contented with the exchange of fame for ease, e’en resolves to let them set the pillows at his back, and gives no farther proof of his existence than just to suck the jelly that prolongs it.”—Piozzi.

⁴ A translation of *Palmerin* was published by Mr. Southey in 1807.

derburne and General Fraser, who had been much obliged to him when they were young Scotchmen entering upon life in England. JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, a man is very apt to complain of the ingratitude of those who have risen far above him. A man, when he gets into a higher sphere, into other habits of life, cannot keep up all his former connexions. Then, Sir, those who knew him formerly upon a level with themselves, may think that they ought still to be treated as on a level, which cannot be: and an acquaintance in a former situation may bring out things which it would be very disagreeable to have mentioned before higher company, though, perhaps, every body knows of them." He placed this subject in a new light to me, and showed, that a man who has risen in the world must not be condemned too harshly for being distant to former acquaintance, even though he may have been much obliged to them. It is, no doubt, to be wished, that a proper degree of attention should be shown by great men to their early friends. But if, either from obtuse insensibility to difference of situation, or presumptuous forwardness, which will not submit even to an exterior observance of it, the dignity of high place cannot be preserved, when they are admitted into the company of those raised above the state in which they once were, encroachment must be repelled, and the kinder feelings sacrificed. To one of the very fortunate persons whom I have mentioned, namely, Mr. Wedderburne, now Lord Loughborough, I must do the justice to relate, that I have been assured by another early acquaintance of his, old Mr. Macklin, who assisted in improving his pronunciation, that he found him very grateful. Macklin, I suppose, had not pressed upon his elevation with so much eagerness as the gentleman who complained of him. Dr. Johnson's remark as to the jealousy entertained of our friends who rise far above us is certainly very just. By this was withered the early friendship between Charles Townshend and Akenside; and many similar instances might be adduced.

He said, "It is commonly a weak man who marries for love." We then talked of marrying women of fortune; and I mentioned a common remark, that a man may be, upon the whole, richer by marrying a woman with a very small portion, because a woman of fortune will be proportionably expensive; whereas, a woman who

things none will be very moderate in expenses. JOHNSON. "Depend upon it, Sir, this is not true. A woman of fortune being used to the handling of money, spends it judiciously; but a woman who gets the command of money for the first time upon her marriage, has such a gust in spending it, that she throws it away with great profusion."

He praised the ladies of the present age, insisting that they were more faithful to their husbands, and more virtuous in every respect, than in former times, because their understandings were better cultivated. It was an undoubted proof of his good sense and good disposition, that he was never querulous, never prone to inveigh against the present times, as is common when superficial minds are on the fret. On the contrary, he was willing to speak favourably of his own age; and, indeed, maintained its superiority in every respect, except in its reverence for government; the relaxation of which he imputed, as its grand cause, to the shock which our monarchy received at the Revolution, though necessary; and, secondly, to the timid concessions made to faction by successive administrations in the reign of his present majesty. I am happy to think, that he lived to see the crown at last recover its just influence.

At Leicester we read in the newspaper that Dr. James was dead.¹ I thought that the death of an old schoolfellow, and one with whom he had lived a good deal in London, would have affected my fellow-traveller much: but he only said, "Ah! poor Jamy!" Afterwards, however, when we were in the chaise, he said, with more tenderness, "Since I set out on this jaunt, I have lost an old friend and a young one:—Dr. James, and poor Harry" (meaning Mr. Thrale's son).

Having lain at St. Alban's on Thursday, March 28, we breakfasted the next morning at Barnet. I expressed to him a weakness of mind which I could not help; an uneasy apprehension that my wife and children, who were at a great distance from me, might, perhaps, be ill. "Sir," said he, "consider how foolish you would think it in *them* to be apprehensive that *you* are ill." This sudden turn relieved me for the moment; but I afterwards perceived it to

¹ Dr. James died 28d March, 1776.—C.

be an ingenious fallacy.¹ I might, to be sure, be satisfied that they had no reason to be apprehensive about me, because I *knew* that I myself was well : but we might have a mutual anxiety, without the charge of folly; because each was, in some degree, uncertain as to the condition of the other.

I enjoyed the luxury of our approach to London, that metropolis which we both loved so much, for the high and varied intellectual pleasure which it furnishes. I experienced immediate happiness while whirled along with such a companion, and said to him, "Sir, you observed one day at General Oglethorpe's, that a man is never happy for the present, but when he is drunk. Will you not add—or when driving rapidly in a post-chaise?" JOHNSON. "No, Sir, you are driving rapidly *from* something, or *to* something."²

Talking of melancholy, he said, "Some men, and very thinking men too, have not those vexing thoughts."³ Sir Joshua Reynolds is the same all the year round. Beauchamp, except when ill and in pain, is the same. But I believe most men have them in the degree in which they are capable of having them. If I were in the country, and were distressed by that malady, I would force myself to take a book; and every time I did it I should find it the easier. Melancholy, indeed, should be diverted by every means but drinking."

¹ Surely it is no fallacy, but a sound and rational argument. He who is perfectly well, and apprehensive concerning the state of another at a distance from him, *knows* to a certainty that the fears of that person concerning *his* health are imaginary and delusive; and hence has a rational ground for supposing that his own apprehensions, concerning his absent wife or friend, are equally unfounded.—M.

² Yet it was but a week before that he had said that "life had few things better than driving rapidly in a post-chaise." This is an instance of the justice of Mrs. Piozzi's observation, that "it was unlucky for those who delighted to echo Johnson's sentiments, that he would not endure from them *to-day* what he had *yesterday*, by his own manner of treating the subject, made them fond of repeating."—C.

³ The phrase "vexing thoughts," is, I think, very expressive. It has been familiar to me from my childhood; for it is to be found in the "Psalms in Metre," used in the churches (I believe I should say *kirks*) of Scotland, Psal. xliii. v. 5.

"Why art thou then cast down my soul? what should discourage thee?

And why with *vexing thoughts* art thou disquieted in me?"

Some allowance must no doubt be made for early prepossession. But at a maturer period of life, after looking at various metrical versions of the Psalms, I am well satisfied that the version used in Scotland is, upon the whole, the best; and that it is vain to think of having a better. It has in general a simplicity and *unction* of sacred poesy; and in many parts its transposition is admirable.

We stopped at Messieurs Dillys, booksellers in the Poultry; from whence he hurried away, in a hackney coach, to Mr. Thrale's in the Borough. I called at his house in the evening, having promised to acquaint Mrs. Williams of his safe return; when, to my surprise, I found him sitting with her at tea, and, as I thought, not in a very good humour; for, it seems, when he had got to Mr. Thrale's, he found the coach was at the door waiting to carry Mrs. and Miss Thrale, and Signor Baretti, their Italian master, to Bath. This was not showing the attention which might have been expected to the "guide, philosopher, and friend;" the *Imlac* who had hastened from the country to console a distressed mother, who he understood was very anxious for his return. They had, I found, without ceremony, proceeded on their journey. I was glad to understand from him that it was still resolved that his tour to Italy with Mr. and Mrs. Thrale should take place, of which he had entertained some doubt, on account of the loss which they had suffered; and his doubts afterwards appeared to be well founded. He observed, indeed, very justly, that "their loss was an additional reason for their going abroad; and if it had not been fixed that he should have been one of the party, he would force them out; but he would not advise them unless his advice was asked, lest they might suspect that he recommended what he wished on his own account." I was not pleased that his intimacy with Mr. Thrale's family, though it no doubt contributed much to his comfort and enjoyment, was not without some degree of restraint: not, as has been grossly suggested, that it was required of him as a task to talk for the entertainment of them and their company; but that he was not quite at his ease; which, however, might partly be owing to his own honest pride—that dignity of mind which is always jealous of appearing too compliant.

On Sunday, March 31, I called on him and showed him, as a curiosity which I had discovered, his "Translation of Lobo's Account of Abyssinia," which Sir John Pringle had lent me, it being then little known as one of his works. He said, "Take no notice of it," or "Don't talk of it." He seemed to think it beneath him, though done at six-and-twenty. I said to him, "Your style, Sir, is much improved since you translated this." He answered, with a sort of triumphant smile, "Sir, I hope it is."

On Wednesday, April 3, in the morning, I found him very busy putting his books in order, and, as they were generally very old ones, clouds of dust were flying around him. He had on a pair of large gloves, such as hedgers use. His presence put me in mind of my uncle Dr. Boswell's description of him, "A robust genius, born to grapple with whole libraries."

I gave him an account of a conversation which had passed between me and Captain Cook, the day before, at dinner at Sir John Pringle's; and he was much pleased with the conscientious accuracy of that celebrated circumnavigator, who set me right as to many of the exaggerated accounts given by Dr. Hawkesworth of his Voyages. I told him that while I was with the captain I caught the enthusiasm of curiosity and adventure, and felt a strong inclination to go with him on his next voyage. JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, a man *does* feel so, till he considers how very little he can learn from such voyages." BOSWELL. "But one is carried away with the general, grand, and indistinct notion of A VOYAGE ROUND THE WORLD." JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir, but a man is to guard himself against taking a thing in general." I said I was certain that a great part of what we are told by the travellers to the South Sea must be conjecture, because they had not enough of the language of those countries to understand so much as they have related. Objects falling under the observation of the senses might be clearly known; but everything intellectual, everything abstract—politics, morals and religion, must be darkly guessed. Dr. Johnson was of the same opinion. He upon another occasion, when a friend mentioned to him several extraordinary facts, as communicated to him by the circumnavigators, slyly observed, "Sir, I never before knew how much I was respected by these gentlemen; they told me none of these things."

He had been in company with Omai, a native of one of the South Sea Islands, after he had been some time in this country. He was struck with the elegance of his behaviour, and accounted for it thus: "Sir, he had passed his time, while in England, only in the best company; so that all that he had acquired of our manners was genteel. As a proof of this, Sir, Lord Mulgrave and he dined one day at Streatham; they sat with their backs to the light fronting me, so that I could not see distinctly; and there was so little of the

savage in Omai, that I was afraid to speak to either, lest I should mistake one for the other."

We agreed to dine to-day at the Mitre tavern, after the rising of the House of Lords, where a branch of the litigation concerning the Douglas estate, in which I was one of the counsel, was to come on. I brought with me Mr. Murray, solicitor-general of Scotland, now one of the judges of the court of session, with the title of Lord Henderland. I mentioned Mr. Solicitor's relation, Lord Charles Hay,¹ with whom I knew Dr. Johnson had been acquainted. JOHNSON. "I wrote something for Lord Charles, and I thought he had nothing to fear from a court-martial. I suffered a great loss when he died; he was a mighty pleasing man in conversation, and a reading man. The character of a soldier is high. They who stand forth the foremost in danger, for the community, have the respect of mankind. An officer is much more respected than any other man who has little money. In a commercial country, money will always purchase respect. But you find, an officer, who has, properly speaking, no money, is everywhere well received and treated with attention. The character of a soldier always stands him instead." BOSWELL. "Yet, Sir, I think that common soldiers are worse thought of than other men in the same rank of life; such as labourers." JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, a common soldier is usually a very gross man, and any quality which procures respect may be overwhelmed by grossness. A man of learning may be so vicious or so ridiculous that you cannot respect him. A common soldier, too, generally eats more than he can pay for. But when a common soldier is civil in his quarters, his red coat procures him a degree of respect." The peculiar respect paid to the military character in France was mentioned. BOSWELL. "I should think that where military men are so numerous, they would be less valuable as not being rare." JOHNSON. "Nay, Sir, wherever a particular character or profession is high in the estimation of a people, those who are of it will be valued above other men. We value an Englishman high in this country, and yet Englishmen are not rare it in."

Mr. Murray praised the ancient philosophers for the candour and

¹ Third son of the Marquis of Tweeddale.

good humour with which those of different sects disputed with each other. JOHNSON. "Sir, they disputed with good humour because they were not in earnest as to religion. Had the ancients been serious in their belief, we should not have had their gods exhibited in the manner we find them represented in the poets. The people would not have suffered it. They disputed with good humour upon their fanciful theories, because they were not interested in the truth of them: when a man has nothing to lose, he may be in good humour with his opponent. Accordingly you see, in Lucian, the Epicurean, who argues only negatively, keeps his temper; the Stoic, who has something positive to preserve, grows angry. Being angry with one who controverts an opinion which you value, is a necessary consequence of the uneasiness which you feel. Every man who attacks my belief, diminishes in some degree my confidence in it, and therefore makes me uneasy. And I am angry with him who makes me uneasy. Those only who believe in revelation have been angry at having their faith called in question; because they only had something upon which they could rest as matter of fact." MURRAY. "It seems to me that we are not angry at a man for controverting an opinion which we believe and value; we rather pity him." JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, to be sure, when you wish a man to have that belief which you think is of infinite advantage, you wish well to him; but your primary consideration is your own quiet. If a madman were to come into this room with a stick in his hand, no doubt we should pity the state of his mind; but our primary consideration would be to take care of ourselves. We should knock him down first, and pity him afterwards. No, Sir, every man will dispute with great good humour upon a subject in which he is not interested. I will dispute very calmly upon the probability of another man's son being hanged; but if a man zealously enforces the probability that my own son will be hanged, I shall certainly not be in a very good humour with him." I added this illustration, "If a man endeavours to convince me that my wife, whom I love very much, and in whom I place great confidence, is a disagreeable woman, and is even unfaithful to me, I shall be very angry, for he is putting me in fear of being unhappy." MURRAY. "But, Sir, truth will always bear an examination." JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir, but it is painful to be forced to defend it. Consider, Sir, how should you

like, though conscious of your innocence, to be tried before a jury for a capital crime, once a week."

We talked of education at great schools ; the advantages and disadvantages of which Johnson displayed in a luminous manner ; but his arguments preponderated so much in favour of the benefit which a boy of good parts might receive at one of them, that I have reason to believe Mr. Murray was very much influenced by what he had heard to-day in his determination to send his own son to Westminster school. I have acted in the same manner with regard to my own two sons ; having placed the eldest at Eton, and the second at Westminster. I cannot say which is best. But in justice to both those noble seminaries, I with high satisfaction declare, that my boys have derived from them a great deal of good, and no evil : and I trust they will, like Horace, be grateful to their father for giving them so valuable an education.

I introduced the topic, which is often ignorantly urged, that the universities of England are too rich ;¹ so that learning does not flourish in them as it would do, if those who teach had smaller salaries, and depended on their assiduity for a great part of their income. JOHNSON. "Sir, the very reverse of this is the truth ; the English universities are not rich enough. Our fellowships are only sufficient to support a man during his studies to fit him for the world, and accordingly in general they are held no longer than till an opportunity offers of getting away. Now and then, perhaps, there is a fellow who grows old in his college ; but this is against his will, unless he be a man very indolent indeed. A hundred a-year is reckoned a good fellowship, and that is no more than is necessary to keep a man decently as a scholar. We do not allow our fellows to marry, because we consider academical institutions as preparatory to a settlement in the world. It is only by being employed as a tutor, that a fellow can obtain anything more than a livelihood. To be sure, a man who has enough without teaching will probably not teach ; for we would all be idle if we could. In the same manner, a man who is to get nothing by teaching will not

¹ Dr. Adam Smith, who was for some time a professor in the university of Glasgow, has uttered, in his "Wealth of Nations," some reflections upon this subject which are certainly not well founded, and seem to be envious.

exert himself Gresham College was intended as a place of instruction for London ; able professors were to read lectures gratis ; they contrived to have no scholars ; whereas, if they had been allowed to receive but sixpence a lecture from each scholar, they would have been emulous to have had many scholars. Everybody will agree that it should be the interest of those who teach to have scholars ; and this is the case in our universities. That they are too rich is certainly not true ; for they have nothing good enough to keep a man of eminent learning with them for his life. In the foreign universities a professorship is a high thing. It is as much almost as a man can make by his learning : and therefore we find the most learned men abroad are in the universities. It is not so with us. Our universities are impoverished of learning, by the penury of their provisions. I wish there were many places of a thousand a-year at Oxford, to keep first-rate men of learning from quitting the university." Undoubtedly, if this were the case, literature would have a still greater dignity and splendour at Oxford, and there would be grander living sources of instruction.

I mentioned Mr. Maclaurin's uneasiness on account of a degree of ridicule carelessly thrown on his deceased father, in Goldsmith's "History of Animated Nature," in which that celebrated mathematician is represented as being subject to fits of yawning so violent as to render him incapable of proceeding in his lecture ; a story altogether unfounded, but for the publication of which the law would give no reparation.¹ This led us to agitate the question, whether legal redress could be obtained, even when a man's deceased relation was calumniated in a publication. Mr. Murray maintained there should be reparation, unless the author could justify himself by proving the fact. JOHNSON. "Sir, it is of so much more consequence that truth should be told, than that individuals should not be made uneasy, that it is much better that the law does not restrain writing freely concerning the characters of the dead. Damages will be given to a man who is calumniated in his lifetime, because he may be hurt in his worldly interest, or at least hurt in his mind ; but the

¹ Dr. Goldsmith was dead before Mr. Maclaurin discovered the ludicrous error. But Mr. Nourse, the bookseller, who was the proprietor of the work, upon being applied to by Sir John Pringle, agreed very handsomely to have the leaf on which it was contained cancelled, and reprinted without it, at his own expense.

law does not regard that uneasiness which a man feels on having his ancestor calumniated. That is too nice. Let him deny what is said, and let the matter have a fair chance by discussion. But if a man could say nothing against a character but what he can prove, history could not be written; for a great deal is known of men of which proof cannot be brought. A minister may be notoriously known to take bribes, and yet you may not be able to prove it." Mr. Murray suggested that the author should be obliged to show some sort of evidence, though he would not require a strict legal proof; but Johnson firmly and resolutely opposed any restraint whatever, as adverse to a free investigation of the characters of mankind.¹

¹ What Dr. Johnson has here said is undoubtedly good sense; yet I am afraid that law, though defined by *Lord Coke* "the perfection of reason," is not altogether *with him*; for it is held in the books, that an attack on the reputation even of a dead man, may be punished as a libel, because tending to a breach of the peace. There is, however, I believe, no modern decided case to that effect. In the King's Bench, Trinity term, 1790, the question occurred on occasion of an indictment, *the King v. Topham*, who, as a *proprietor* of a newspaper entitled "The World," was found guilty of a libel against Earl Cowper, deceased, because certain injurious charges against his lordship were published in that paper. An arrest of judgment having been moved for, the case was afterwards solemnly argued. My friend, Mr. Const, whom I delight in having an opportunity to praise, not only for his abilities but his manners—a gentleman whose ancient German blood has been mellowed in England, and who may truly be said to unite the *baron* and the *barrister*, was one of the Counsel for Mr. Topham. He displayed much learning and ingenuity upon the general question; which, however, was not decided, as the court granted an arrest chiefly on the informality of the indictment. No man has a higher reverence for the law of England than I have; but with all deference I cannot help thinking, that prosecution by indictment, if a defendant is never to be allowed to justify, must often be very oppressive, unless juries, whom I am more and more confirmed in holding to be judges of law as well as of fact, resolutely interpose. Of late an act of parliament has passed declaratory of their full right to one as well as the other, in matter of libel; and the bill having been brought in by a popular gentleman, many of his party have in most extravagant terms declaimed on the wonderful acquisition to the liberty of the press. For my own part I ever was clearly of opinion that this right was inherent in the very constitution of a jury, and indeed in sense and reason inseparable from their important function. To establish it, therefore, by statute, is, I think, narrowing its foundation, which is the broad and deep basis of common law. Would it not rather weaken the right of primogeniture, or any other old and universally acknowledged right, should the legislature pass an act in favour of it? In my "Letter to the People of Scotland, against diminishing the number of the Lords of Session," published in 1785, there is the following passage, which, as a concise, and I hope a fair and rational state of the matter, I presume to quote: "The juries of England are judges of *law* as well as of *fact* in *many civil* and in *all criminal* trials. That my principles of *resistance* may not be misapprehended, any more than my principles of *submission*, I protest that I should be the last man in the world to encourage juries to contradict rashly, wantonly, or perversely, the opinion of the judges. On the contrary, I would have them listen respectfully to the advice they receive from the bench, by which they may often be well directed in forming *their own opinion*; which, 'and not another's,' is the opinion they are to return *upon their oaths*. But where, after due attention to all that the judge has said, they are decidedly of a different opinion from him, they have not only a *power* and a *right*, but they are *bound in conscience* to bring in a verdict accordingly."

CHAPTER XL

1776.

~~English~~ Corruptions—Licensed Stews—Seduction—"Jack Ellis"—Gaming—Card-playing—~~Con-~~
~~ugal~~ Obligations—Law of Usury—Beggars—Dr. Cheyne—Solitude—Joseph Simpson—
 Children—Cowley—Flatman's Poems—Cibbers's "Lives"—Gray—Akenside—Mason—The
 Reviews—Lord Lyttelton—"The Spectator"—Dr. Barry—Dinner at General Paoli's—
 "Abel Druggar"—Italy—The Mediterranean—Poetical Translation—Art of Printing—
 Education of the People—Thomson—"Hudibras"—Purpose of Tragedy—"Othello"—
 John Dennis—Swearing—Wine-drinking—Cumberland's "Odes"—Savage Life.

ON Thursday, 4th April, having called on Dr. Johnson, I said, it was a pity that truth was not so firm as to bid defiance to all attacks, so that it might be shot at as much as people chose to attempt, and yet remain unhurt. JOHNSON. "Then, Sir, it would not be shot at. Nobody attempts to dispute that two and two make four : but with contests concerning moral truth, human passions are generally mixed, and therefore it must be ever liable to assault and misrepresentation"

On Friday, 5th April, being Good Friday, after having attended the morning service at St. Clement's church, I walked home with Johnson. We talked of the Roman Catholic religion. JOHNSON. "In the barbarous ages, Sir, priests and people were equally deceived ; but afterwards there were gross corruptions introduced by the clergy, such as indulgences to priests to have concubines, and the worship of images, not, indeed, inculcated, but knowingly permitted." He strongly censured the licensed stews at Rome. BOSWELL. "So then, Sir, you would allow of no irregular intercourse whatever between the sexes?" JOHNSON. "To be suré I would not, Sir. I would punish it much more than it is done, and so restrain it. In all countries there has been fornication, as in all countries there has been theft; but there may be more or less of the one, as well as of the other, in proportion to the force of law. All men will naturally commit fornication, as all men will naturally steal. And, Sir, it is very absurd to argue, as has been often done, that

It was a very remarkable circumstance about Johnson, whom shall w observers have supposed to have been ignorant of the world, that very few men had seen greater variety of characters ; and none could observe them better, as was evident from the strong yet nice portraits which he often drew. I have frequently thought that if he had made out what the French call *un catalogue raisonné* of all the people who had passed under his observation, it would have afforded a very rich fund of instruction and entertainment. The suddenness with which his accounts of some of them started out in conversation was not less pleasing than surprising. I remember he once observed to me, " It is wonderful, Sir, what is to be found in London. The most literary conversation that I ever enjoyed was at the table of Jack Ellis, a money-scrivener, behind the Royal Exchange, with whom I at one period used to dine generally once a week."¹

Volumes would be required to contain a list of his numerous and various acquaintance, none of whom he ever forgot ; and could describe and discriminate them all with precision and vivacity. He associated with persons the most widely different in manners, abilities, rank and accomplishments. He was at once the companion of the brilliant Colonel Forrester of the guards, who wrote " The Polite Philosopher," and of the awkward and uncouth Robert Levet ; of Lord Thurlow, and Mr. Sastres, the Italian master ; and has dined one day with the beautiful, gay, and fascinating Lady Craven,

¹ This Mr. Ellis was, I believe, the last of that profession called *scriveners*, which is one of the London companies, but of which the business is no longer carried on separately, but is transacted by attorneys and others. He was a man of literature and talents. He was the author of a Hudibrastic version of Maphæus's Canto, in addition to the *Æneid* : of some poems in Dodsley's collection, and various other small pieces ; but, being a very modest man, he never put his name to anything. He showed me a translation which he had made of Ovid's Epistles, very prettily done. There is a good engraved portrait of him by Pether, from a picture by Fry, which hangs in the hall of the Scriveners' company. I visited him October 4, 1790, in his ninety-third year, and found his judgment distinct and clear, and his memory, though faded so as to fail him occasionally, yet, as he assured me, and I indeed perceived, able to serve him very well, after a little recollection. It was agreeable to observe, that he was free from the discontent and fretfulness which too often molest old age. He, in the summer of that year, walked to Rotherhithe, where he dined, and walked home in the evening. He died Dec. 31, 1791.

² Lord Macartney, who, with his other distinguished qualities, is remarkable also for elegant pleasantry, told me that he met Johnson at Lady Craven's, and that he seemed jealous of any interference. " So," said his lordship smiling, " I kept back."

and the next with good Mrs. Gardiner, the tallow-chandler, on Snow-hill.¹

On my expressing my wonder at his discovering so much of the knowledge peculiar to different professions, he told me, "I learnt what I know of law chiefly from Mr. Ballow,² a very able man. I learnt some too from Chambers: but was not so teachable then. One is not willing to be taught by a young man." When I expressed a wish to know more about Mr. Ballow, Johnson said, "Sir, I have seen him but once these twenty years. The tide of life has driven us different ways." I was sorry at the time to hear this; but whoever quits the creeks of private connections, and fairly gets into the great ocean of London, will by imperceptible degrees, unavoidably experience such cessations of acquaintance.

"My knowledge of physic," he added, "I learnt from Dr. James, whom I helped in writing the proposals for his Dictionary, and also a little in the Dictionary itself." I also learnt from Dr. Lawrence, but was then grown more stubborn."

A curious incident happened to-day, while Mr. Thrale and I sat with him. Francis announced that a large packet was brought to him from the post-office, said to have come from Lisbon, and it was charged *seven pounds ten shillings*. He would not receive it, supposing it to be some trick, nor did he even look at it. But upon

¹ This is much exaggerated. His polite acquaintance did not extend much beyond the circle of Mr. Thrale, Sir Joshua Reynolds, and the members of the Club. There is no record, that I recollect, of his having dined at the table of any peer in London (Lord Lucan, an Irish peer, is hardly an exception): he seems scarcely to have known an *English* bishop, except Dr. Shipley, whom every one knew, and Bishop Porteus; and except by a few occasional visits at the *bas-bleus* assemblies of Mrs. Montagu and Mrs. Vesey, we do not trace him in anything like fashionable society. This seems strange to us; for happily, in our day, a literary man of much less than Johnson's eminence would be courted into the highest and most brilliant ranks of society. Lord Wellesley recollects, with regret, the little notice, compared with his posthumous reputation, which the *fashionable* world seemed to take of Johnson. He was known as a great writer; but his social and conversational powers were not so generally appreciated.—C.

² There is an account of him in Sir John Hawkins's *Life of Johnson*, p. 244. Mr. Thomas Ballow was author of an excellent Treatise on Equity, printed anonymously in 1742, and lately republished, with very valuable additions, by John Fonblanque, Esq. Mr. Ballow died suddenly in London, July 26, 1782, aged seventy-five, and is mentioned in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for that year as "a great Greek scholar, and famous for his knowledge of the old philosophy."—M.

³ I have in vain endeavoured to find out what parts Johnson wrote for Dr. James; perhaps medical men may.

inquiry afterwards he found that it was a real packet for him, from that very friend in the East Indies of whom he had been speaking ; and the ship which carried it having come to Portugal, this packet with others had been put into the post-office at Lisbon.

I mentioned a new gaming club, of which Mr. Beauchamp had given me an account, where the members played to a desperate extent.' JOHNSON. "Depend upon it, Sir, this is mere talk. *Who* is ruined by gaming? You will not find six instances in an age. There is a strange rout made about deep play ; whereas you have many more people ruined by adventurous trade, and yet we do not hear such an outcry against it." THRALE. "There may be few absolutely ruined by deep play ; but very many are much hurt in their circumstances by it." JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir, and so are very many by other kinds of expense" I had heard him talk once before in the same manner ; and at Oxford, he said "he wished he had learned to play at cards." The truth, however, is, that he loved to display his ingenuity in argument ; and therefore would sometimes in conversation maintain opinions which he was sensible were wrong, but in supporting which, his reasoning and wit would be most conspicuous. He would begin thus : "Why Sir, as to the good or evil of card playing—" "Now," said Garrick, "he is thinking which side he shall take." He appeared to have a pleasure in contradiction, especially when any opinion whatever was delivered with an air of confidence ; so that there was hardly any topic, if not one of the great truths of religion and morality, that he might not have been incited to argue, either for or against. Lord Elibank² had the highest admiration of his powers. He once observed to me, "Whatever opinion Johnson maintains, I will not say that he convinces me ; but he never fails to show me, that he had good reasons for it." I have heard Johnson pay his lordship this high compliment : "I never was in Lord Elibank's company without learning something."

We sat together till it was too late for the afternoon service

¹ Lord Lauderdale informed me that Mr. Fox (a great authority on this as well as on more important subjects) told him, that the deepest play he had ever known was between the year 1772 and the beginning of the American war. Lord Lauderdale instanced £5,000 being staked on a single card at faro.—C.

² Patrick Lord Elibank, who died in 1778.

Thrale said, he had come with intention to go to church with us. We went at seven to evening prayers at St. Clement's church, after having drunk coffee; an indulgence which I understand Johnson yielded to on this occasion, in compliment to Thrale.¹

On Sunday, April 7, Easter-day, after having been at St Paul's cathedral, I came to Dr. Johnson, according to my usual custom. It seemed to me, that there was always something particularly mild and placid in his manner upon this holy festival, the commemoration of the most joyful event in the history of our world, the resurrection of our Lord and Saviour, who, having triumphed over death and the grave, proclaimed immortality to mankind.²

I repeated to him an argument of a lady of my acquaintance, who maintained, that her husband's having been guilty of numberless infidelities, released her from conjugal obligations, because they were reciprocal. JOHNSON. "This is miserable stuff, Sir. To the contract of marriage, besides the man and wife, there is a third party—society; and if it be considered as a vow—God: and, therefore, it cannot be dissolved by their consent alone. Laws are not made for particular cases, but for men in general. A woman may be unhappy with her husband; but she cannot be freed from him without the approbation of the civil and ecclesiastical power. A man may be unhappy, because he is not so rich as another; but he is not to seize upon another's property with his own hand." BOSWELL. "But, Sir, this lady does not want that the contract should be dissolved; she only argues that she may indulge herself in gallantries with equal freedom as her husband does, provided she takes

¹ This day he himself thus records:—"Though for the past week I have had an anxious design of communicating to-day, I performed no particular act of devotion, till on Friday I went to church. I fasted, though less rigorously than at other times. I, by negligence, poured milk into the tea, and, in the afternoon, drank one dish of coffee with Thrale; yet at night, after a fit of drowsiness, I felt myself very much disordered by emptiness, and called for tea, with peevish and impatient eagerness. My distress was very great."—*Pr. and Med.* p. 145.—C.

² Yet with what different colours he paints his own state at this moment!—"The time is again [come] at which, since the death of my poor dear Tetty, on whom God have mercy, I have annually commemorated the mystery of redemption, and annually purposed to amend my life. My reigning sin, to which perhaps many others are appendant, is waste of time, and general sluggishness, to which I was always inclined, and, in part of my life, have been almost compelled by morbid melancholy and disturbance of mind. Melancholy has had in me its paroxysms and remissions, but I have not improved the intervals, nor sufficiently resisted my natural inclination, or sickly habits." He adds, however: "In the morning I had at church some radiations of comfort."—*Pr. and Med.* p. 145.—C.

care not to introduce a spurious issue into his family. You know, Sir, what Macrobius has told of Julia.¹ JOHNSON. "This lady of yours, Sir, I think, is very fit for a brothel."

Mr. Macbean, author of the "Dictionary of Ancient Geography," came in. He mentioned that he had been forty years absent from Scotland. "Ah, Boswell!" said Johnson smiling, "what would you give to be forty years from Scotland?" I said, "I should not like to be so long absent from the seat of my ancestors." This gentleman, Mrs. Williams, and Mr. Levett, dined with us.

Dr. Johnson made a remark, which both Mr. Macbean and I thought new. It was this: that "the law against usury is for the protection of creditors as well as debtors; for if there were no such check, people would be apt, from the temptation of great interest, to lend to desperate persons, by whom they would lose their money. Accordingly, there are instances of ladies being ruined, by having injudiciously sunk their fortunes for high annuities, which, after a few years, ceased to be paid, in consequence of the ruined circumstances of the borrower."

Mrs. Williams was very peevish;² and I wondered at Johnson's patience with her now, as I had often done on similar occasions. The truth is, that his humane consideration of the forlorn and indigent state in which this lady was left by her father induced him to treat her with the utmost tenderness, and even to be desirous of procuring her amusement, so as sometimes to incommode many of his friends, by carrying her with him to their houses, where, from her manner of eating, in consequence of her blindness, she could not but offend the delicacy of persons of nice sensations.

After coffee, we went to afternoon service in St. Clement's church. Observing some beggars in the street as we walked along, I said to him, I supposed there was no civilized country in the world where the misery of want in the lowest classes of the people was prevented. JOHNSON. "I believe, Sir, there is not; but it is better that some should be unhappy, than that none should be happy, which would be the case in a general state of equality."

¹ "Nunquam enim nisi navi plenâ tollo vectorem."—*Lih. ii. c. vi.*

² Boswell was not partial to Mrs. Williams. Peevish she probably was: but let it be remembered that she was old, blind, poor, and a dependent.—O.

When the service was ended, I went home with him, and we sat quietly by ourselves. He recommended Dr. Cheyne's books. I said, I thought Cheyne had been reckoned whimsical. "So he was," said he, "in some things; but there is no end of objections. There are few books to which some objection or other may not be made." He added, "I would not have you read any thing else of Cheyne, but his book on Health, and his 'English Malady.'"

Upon the question whether a man who had been guilty of vicious actions would do well to force himself into solitude and sadness? JOHNSON. "No, Sir, unless it prevent him from being vicious again. With some people, gloomy penitence is only madness turned upside down. A man may be gloomy, till, in order to be relieved from gloom, he has recourse again to criminal indulgencies."

On Wednesday, 10th April, I dined with him at Mr. Thrale's, where were Dr. Murphy and some other company. Before dinner, Dr. Johnson and I passed some time by ourselves. I was sorry to find it was now resolved that the proposed journey to Italy should not take place this year. He said, "I am disappointed, to be sure; but it is not a great disappointment." I wondered to see him bear, with a philosophical calmness, what would have made most people peevish and fretful.¹ I perceived that he had so warmly cherished the hope of enjoying classical scenes, that he could not easily part with the scheme; for he said, "I shall probably contrive to get to Italy some other way. But I won't mention it to Mr. and Mrs. Thrale, as it might vex them." I suggested that going to Italy might have done Mr. and Mrs. Thrale good. JOHNSON. "I rather believe not, Sir. While grief is fresh, every attempt to divert only irritates. You must wait till grief be *digested*, and then amusement will dissipate the remains of it."

At dinner, Mr. Murphy entertained us with the history of Mr. Joseph Simpson, a schoolfellow of Dr. Johnson's, a barrister at law

¹ That he cordially assented to the reasons which operated on the minds of Mr. and Mrs. Thrale to postpone the journey, appears from his letter to the lady:—"April 9, 1776. Mr. Thrale's alteration of purpose is not weakness of resolution; it is a wise man's compliance with the change of things, and with the new duties which the change produces. Whoever expects me to be angry will be disappointed. I do not even grieve at the effect: I only grieve for the cause." His desire, however, to go abroad was, says Mrs. Piozzi, "very great; and he had a longing wish, too, to leave some Latin verses at the Grand Char treux."—C.

of good parts, but who fell into a dissipated course of life, incompatible with that success in his profession which he once had, and would otherwise have deservedly maintained ; yet he still preserved a dignity in his deportment. He wrote a tragedy on the story of Leonidas, entitled "The Patriot." He read it to a company of lawyers, who found so many faults that he wrote it over again : so then there were two tragedies on the same subject and with the same title. Dr. Johnson told us, that one of them was still in his possession. This very piece was, after his death, published by some person who had been about him, and, for the sake of a little hasty profit, was fallaciously advertised so as to make it be believed to have been written by Johnson himself.

I said, I disliked the custom which some people had of bringing their children into company, because it in a manner forced us to pay foolish compliments to please their parents. JOHNSON. "You are right, Sir. We may be excused for not caring much about other people's children, for there are many who care very little about their own children. It may be observed, that men who, from being engaged in business, or from their course of life in whatever way, seldom see their children, do not care much about them. I myself should not have had much fondness for a child of my own." MRS. THRALE. "Nay, Sir, how can you talk so?" JOHNSON. "At least, I never wished to have a child."¹

Mr. Murphy mentioned Dr. Johnson's having a design to publish an edition of Cowley. Johnson said, he did not know but he should; and he expressed his disapprobation of Dr. Hurd, for having published a mutilated edition under the title of "Select Works of Abraham Cowley." Mr. Murphy thought it a bad precedent ; observing, that any author might be used in the same manner, and

¹ I was once relating to him how Dr. Collier (of the Commons) observed, that the love one bore to children was from the anticipation one's mind made while one contemplated them : "We hope," says he, "that they will some time make wise men, or amiable women ; and we suffer them to take up our affection beforehand. One cannot love *lumps of flesh*, and little infants are nothing more." "On the contrary," says Johnson, "one can scarcely help wishing, while one fondles a baby, that it may never live to become a man ; for it is so probable that when he becomes a man, he should be sure to end in a scoundrel." Girls were less displeasing to him ; "for as their temptations were fewer," he said, "their virtue in this life, and happiness in the next, were less improbable ; and he loved," he said, "to see a knot of little misses dearly."—PROZ.

that it was pleasing to see the variety of an author's compositions at different periods.

We talked of Flatman's poems ; and Mrs. Thrale observed, that Pope had partly borrowed from him "The Dying Christian to his Soul." Johnson repeated Rochester's verses upon Flatman, which I think by much too severe :—

" Nor that slow drudge in swift Pindaric strains,
Flatman, who Cowley imitates with pains,
And rides a jaded muse, whipt with loose reins.

I like to recollect all the passages that I heard Johnson repeat : it stamps a value on them.

He told us that the book entitled "The Lives of the Poets," by Mr. Cibber, was entirely compiled by Mr. Shiels, a Scotchman, one of his amanuenses. "The booksellers," said he, "gave Theophilus Cibber, who was then in prison, ten guineas to allow Mr. Cibber to be put upon the title-page, as the author ; by this, a double imposition was intended ; in the first place, that it was the work of a Cibber at all ; and, in the second place, that it was the work of old Cibber."

Mr. Murphy said, that "The Memoirs of Gray's Life set him much higher in his estimation than his poems did : for you there saw a man constantly at work in literature." Johnson acquiesced in this ; but depreciated the book, I thought, very unreasonably. For he said, "I forced myself to read it, only because it was a common topic of conversation. I found it mighty dull ; and, as to the style, it is fit for the second table." Why he thought so I was at a loss to conceive. He now gave it as his opinion, that "Akenside was a superior poet both to Gray and Mason."

Talking of the Reviews, Johnson said, "I think them very impartial : I do not know an instance of partiality." He mentioned what had passed upon the subject of the Monthly Critical Reviews, in the conversation with which his Majesty had honoured him. He expatiated a little more on them this evening. "The Monthly Reviewers," said he, "are not Deists ; but they are Christians with as little Christianity as may be ; and are for pulling down all establishments. The Critical Reviewers are for supporting the consti-

tion both in church and state. The Critical Reviewers, I believe, often review without reading the books through ; but lay hold of a topic, and write chiefly from their own minds. The Monthly Reviewers are duller men, and are glad to read the books through."

He talked of Lord Lyttelton's extreme anxiety as an author ; observing, that "he was thirty years in preparing his history, and that he employed a man to point it for him ; as if (laughing) another man could point his sense better than himself."¹ Mr. Murphy said, he understood his history was kept back several years for fear of Smollett.² JOHNSON. "This seems strange to Murphy and me, who never felt that anxiety, but sent what he wrote to the press, and let it take its chance." MRS. THRALE. "The time has been, Sir, when you felt it." JOHNSON. "Why really, Madam, I do not recollect a time when that was the case."

Talking of "The Spectator," he said, "It is wonderful that there is such a proportion of bad papers, in the half of the work which was not written by Addison ; for there was all the world to write that half, yet not half of that half is good. One of the finest pieces in the English language is the paper on Novelty [No. 626], yet we do not hear it talked of. It was written by Grove,³ a dissenting teacher. He would not, I perceived, call him a *dergyman*, though he was candid enough to allow very great merit to his composition. Mr. Murphy said, he remembered when there were several people alive in London, who enjoyed a considerable reputation merely from having written a paper in "The Spectator." He mentioned particularly Mr. Ince, who used to frequent Tom's coffee-house. "But," said Johnson, "you must consider how highly Steele speaks of Mr. Ince." [No. 555.] He would not allow that the paper [No. 364] on carrying a boy to travel, signed Philip Homebred, which was reported to be written by the Lord Chancellor Hardwicke, had merit. He said, "it was quite vulgar, and had nothing luminous."

¹ It may be doubted whether Johnson's dislike of Lord Lyttelton did not here lead him into an error. Persons not so habituated with the details of printing as he was may have been less exact at the use of these conventional signs. Lord Byron wrote to Mr. Murray : "Do you know any one who can stop ? I mean *point*, *commas*, and so forth, for I am, I fear, a sad hand at your punctuation."—*Moore's Life of Byron*, vol. i. p. 417.

² Dr. Smollett was for some time editor of the Critical Review.

³ Henry Grove was born at Taunton in 1693, and died in 1737.

Johnson mentioned Dr. Barry's ¹ System of Physic. "He was a man," said he, "who had acquired a high reputation in Dublin, came over to England, and brought his reputation with him, but had not great success. His notion was, that pulsation occasions death by attrition; and that, therefore, the way to preserve life is to retard pulsation. But we know that pulsation is strongest in infants, and that we increase in growth while it operates in its regular course; so it cannot be the cause of destruction." Soon after this, he said something very flattering to Mrs. Thrale, which I do not recollect; but it concluded with wishing her long life. "Sir," said I, "if Dr. Barry's system be true, you have now shortened Mrs. Thrale's life, perhaps some minutes, by accelerating her pulsation"

LETTER 245.

TO MISS REYNOLDS.

"April 11, 1776.

"DEAREST MADAM,—To have acted, with regard to you, in a manner either unfriendly or disrespectful, would give me great pain; and, I hope, will be always very contrary to my intention. That I staid away was merely accidental. I have seldom dined from home; and I did not think my opinion necessary to your information in any proprieties of behaviour. The poor parents of the child are much grieved, and much dejected. The journey to Italy is put off, but they go to Bath on Monday. A visit from you will be well taken, and I think your intimacy is such that you may very properly pay it in a morning. I am sure that it will be thought seasonable and kind, and I wish you not to omit it. I am, dear Madam, &c.

SAM. JOHNSON.

On Thursday, April 11, I dined with him at General Paoli's, in whose house I now resided, and where I had ever afterwards the honour of being entertained with the kindest attention as his constant guest, while I was in London, till I had a house of my own there. I mentioned my having that morning introduced to Mr. Garrick, Count Neni, a Flemish nobleman of great rank and fortune, to whom Garrick talked of Abel Drugger as a *small part*; and related, with pleasant vanity, that a Frenchman, who had seen him in one of his low characters, exclaimed, "*Comment! je ne le crois pas. Ce n'est pas Monsieur Garrick, ce grand homme!*" Garrick added, with an appearance of grave recollection, "If I were to begin life

¹ Sir Edward Barry, Baronet.—B. He published, in 1775, a curious work on the Wines of the Ancients.—C.

again, I think I should not play those low characters." Upon which I observed, "Sir, you would be in the wrong, for your great excellence is your variety of playing, your representing so well characters so very different." JOHNSON. "Garriek, Sir, was not in earnest in what he said: for, to be sure, his peculiar excellence is his variety; and, perhaps, there is not any one character which has not been as well acted by somebody else, as he could do it." BOSWELL. "Why then, Sir, did he talk so?" JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, to make you answer as you did." BOSWELL. "I don't know, Sir; he seemed to dip deep into his mind for the reflection." JOHNSON. "He had not far to dip, Sir; he had said the same thing, probably, twenty times before."

Of a nobleman raised at a very early period to high office, he said, "His parts, Sir, are pretty well for a lord; but he would not be distinguished in a man who had nothing else but his parts."

A journey to Italy was still in his thoughts. He said, "A man who has not been in Italy is always conscious of an inferiority, from his not having seen what is expected a man should see. The grand object of travelling is to see the shores of the Mediterranean. On those shores were the four great empires of the world; the Assyrian, the Persian, the Grecian, and the Roman. All our religion, almost all our law, almost all our arts, almost all that sets us above savages, has come to us from the shores of the Mediterranean." The General observed, that "THE MEDITERRANEAN would be a noble subject for a poem."

We talked of translation. I said, I could not define it, nor could I think of a similitude to illustrate it; but that it appeared to me the translation of poetry could be only imitation. JOHNSON. "You may translate books of science exactly. You may also translate history, in so far as it is not embellished with oratory, which is poetical. Poetry, indeed, cannot be translated; and, therefore, it is the poets that preserve languages; for we would not be at the trouble to learn a language, if we could have all that is written in it just as well in a translation. But as the beauties of poetry cannot be preserved in any language except that in which it was originally written, we learn the language."

A gentleman maintained that the art of printing had hurt real

learning, by disseminating idle writings. JOHNSON. "Sir, if it had not been for the art of printing, we should now have no learning at all; for books would have perished faster than they could have been transcribed." This observation seems not just, considering for how many ages books were preserved by writing alone.¹

The same gentleman maintained, that a general diffusion of knowledge among a people was a disadvantage; for it made the vulgar rise above their humble sphere. JOHNSON. "Sir, while knowledge is a distinction, those who are possessed of it will naturally rise above those who are not. Merely to read and write was a distinction at first; but we see when reading and writing have become general, the common people keep their stations. And so, were higher attainments to become general, the effect would be the same."

"Goldsmith," he said, "referred everything to vanity; his virtues and his vices too were from that motive. He was not a social man. He never exchanged mind with you."²

We spent the evening at Mr. Hoole's. Mr. Mickle, the excellent translator of "The Lusiad," was there. I have preserved little of the conversation of this evening. Dr. Johnson said, "Thomson had a true poetical genius, the power of viewing everything in a poetical light. His fault is such a cloud of words sometimes, that the sense can hardly peep through. Shiels, who compiled 'Cibber's Lives of the Poets,' was one day sitting with me. I took down Thomson, and read aloud a large portion of him, and then asked,—Is not this fine? Shiels having expressed the highest admiration—'Well, Sir,' said I, 'I have omitted every other line.'"

I related a dispute between Goldsmith and Mr. Robert Dodsley, one day when they and I were dining at Tom Davies's, in 1762.

¹ The author did not recollect that of the books preserved (and an infinite number was lost) all were confined to two languages. In modern times and modern languages, France and Italy alone produce more books in a given time than Greece and Rome: put England, Spain, Germany, and the northern kingdoms out of the question.—BLAKEWAY.

² This seems not quite clear. Poor Goldsmith was, in the ordinary sense of the word, *social* and communicative to a fault. Dr. Johnson no doubt meant, that he was too much of an egotist, and too eager in conversation, to be a man of agreeable social habits; and although he had no reserve whatever, and opened whatever he had in his mind with the utmost confidence of indiscretion (see *passim*), yet never *exchanged* minds; that is, he never patiently *interchanged* opinions.—C.

Goldsmith asserted, that there was no poetry produced in this age. Dodsley appealed to his own collection, and maintained, that though you could not find a palace like Dryden's "Ode on St. Cecilia's Day," you had villages composed of very pretty houses; and he mentioned particularly "The Spleen." JOHNSON. "I think Dodsley gave up the question. He and Goldsmith said the same thing; only he said it in a softer manner than Goldsmith did; for he acknowledged there was no poetry, nothing that towered above the common mark. You may find wit and humour in verse, and yet no poetry. 'Hudibras' has a profusion of these; yet it is not to be reckoned a poem. 'The Spleen,' in Dodsley's collection, on which you say he chiefly rested, is not poetry." BOSWELL. "Does not Gray's poetry, Sir, tower above the common mark?" JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir; but we must attend to the difference between what men in general cannot do if they would, and what every man may do if he would. Sixteen-string Jack¹ towered above the common mark." BOSWELL. "Then, Sir, what is poetry?" JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, it is much easier to say what it is not. We all *know* what light is; but it is not easy to *tell* what it is."²

On Friday, April 12, I dined with him at our friend Tom Davies's, where we met Mr. Cradock,³ of Leicestershire, author of "Zobeide," a tragedy; a very pleasing gentleman, to whom my friend Dr. Farmer's very excellent Essay on the Learning of Shakspeare is addressed; and Dr. Harwood, who has written and published various works, particularly a fantastical translation of the New Testament, in modern phrase, and with a Socinian twist.⁴

I introduced Aristotle's doctrine, in his "Art of Poetry," of "*καθαρσις των παθηματων*," the purging of the passions," as the purpose of tragedy.⁵ "But how are the passions to be purged by

¹ A noted highwayman, who, after having been several times tried and acquitted, was at last hanged. He was remarkable for foppery in his dress, and particularly for wearing a bunch of sixteen strings at the knees of his breeches.

² Gray, he said, was the very Torrè of poetry; he played his cornuscations so speciously that his steel dust is mistaken by many for a shower of gold.—HAWKINS.—Torrè was a foreigner who, some years ago, exhibited a variety of splendid fire-works at Marybone Gardens.—C.

³ Who has since published "Memoirs of his own Times," of which I have made occasional use.—C.

⁴ He is more advantageously known by a work on the classics.—C.

⁵ See an ingenious essay on this subject by the late Dr. Moor, Greek professor at Glas-

terror and pity?" said I, with an assumed air of ignorance, to incite him to talk, for which it was often necessary to employ some address. JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, you are to consider what is the meaning of purging in the original sense. It is to expel impurities from the human body. The mind is subject to the same imperfection. The passions are the great movers of human actions; but they are mixed with such impurities, that it is necessary they should be purged or refined by means of terror and pity. For instance, ambition is a noble passion; but by seeing upon the stage, that a man who is so excessively ambitious as to raise himself by injustice is punished, we are terrified at the fatal consequences of such a passion. In the same manner, a certain degree of resentment is necessary; but if we see that a man carries it too far, we pity the object of it, and are taught to moderate that passion." My record upon this occasion does great injustice to Johnson's expression, which was so forcible and brilliant, that Mr. Cradock whispered me, "O that his words were written in a book!"

I observed, the great defect of the tragedy of "Othello" was, that it had not a moral; for that no man could resist the circumstances of suspicion which were artfully suggested to Othello's mind. JOHNSON. "In the first place, Sir, we learn from Othello this very useful moral, not to make an unequal match; in the second place, we learn not to yield too readily to suspicion. The handkerchief is merely a trick, though a very pretty trick; but there are no other circumstances of reasonable suspicion, except what is related by Iago of Cassio's warm expression concerning Desdemona in his sleep; and that depended entirely upon the assertion of one man. No, Sir, I think Othello has more moral than almost any play."

Talking of a penurious gentleman of our acquaintance, Johnson said, "Sir, he is narrow, not so much from avarice, as from impotence to spend his money. He cannot find in his heart to pour out a bottle of wine; but he would not much care if it should sour." He said, he wished to see "John Dennis's Critical Works" collected.

gow.—B. See also a learned note on this passage of Aristotle, by Mr. Twining, in his admirable translation of the Poetics, in which the various explanations of other critics are considered, and in which Dr. Moor's essay is particularly discussed.—J. BOSWELL, jun.

Davies said, they would not sell. Dr. Johnson seemed to think otherwise.

Davies said of a well-known dramatic author,¹ that "he lived upon *potted stories*, and that he made his way as Hannibal did, by *vinegar* ; having begun by attacking people, particularly the players."

He reminded Dr. Johnson of Mr. Murphy's having paid him the highest compliment that ever was paid to a layman, by asking his pardon for repeating some oaths in the course of telling a story.²

Johnson and I supped this evening at the Crown and Anchor tavern, in company with Sir Joshua Reynolds, Mr. Langton, Mr. Nairne, now one of the Scotch judges, with the title of Lord Dunslin, and my very worthy friend, Sir William Forbes, of Pitsligo.

We discussed the question, whether drinking improved conversation and benevolence. Sir Joshua maintained it did. JOHNSON. "No, Sir : before dinner men meet with great inequality of understanding ; and those who are conscious of their inferiority have the modesty not to talk. When they have drunk wine, every man feels himself happy, and loses that modesty, and grows impudent and vociferous : but he is not improved : he is only not sensible of his defects." Sir Joshua said the Doctor was talking of the effects of excess in wine ; but that a moderate glass enlivened the mind, by giving a proper circulation to the blood. "I am," said he, "in very good spirits, when I get up in the morning. By dinner-time I am exhausted ; wine puts me in the same state as when I got up : and I am sure that moderate drinking makes people talk better." JOHNSON. "No, Sir ; wine gives not light, gay, ideal, hilarity ; but tumultuous, noisy, clamorous merriment. I have heard none of those drunken,—nay, drunken is a coarse word,—none of those *vinous flights*." SIR JOSHUA. "Because you have sat by, quite sober, and felt an envy of the happiness of those who were drinking." JOHNSON. "Perhaps, contempt. And, Sir, it is not necessary to be drunk one's self, to relish the wit of drunkenness. Do we not judge of the

¹ Sir James Mackintosh thought Cumberland was meant. I am now satisfied that it was Arthur Murphy.—C. 1835.

² When a man of some note was talking before him, and interlarding his stories with oaths, Johnson said, "Sir, all this swearing will do nothing for our story ; I beg you will not swear." The narrator went on swearing : Johnson said, "I must again entreat you not to swear." He swore again ; Johnson quitted the room.—HAWKINS.

drunken wit of the dialogue between Iago and Cassio, the most excellent in its kind, when we are quite sober? Wit is wit, by whatever means it is produced; and, if good, will appear so at all times. I admit that the spirits are raised by drinking, as by the common participation of any pleasure: cock-fighting or bear-baiting will raise the spirits of a company, as drinking does, though surely they will not improve conversation. I also admit, that there are some sluggish men who are improved by drinking; as there are fruits which are not good till they are rotten. There are such men, but they are medlars. I indeed allow that there have been a very few men of talents who were improved by drinking; but I maintain that I am right as to the effects of drinking in general: and let it be considered, that there is no position, however false in its universality, which is not true of some particular man." Sir William Forbes said, "Might not a man warmed with wine be like a bottle of beer, which is made brisker by being set before the fire." "Nay," said Johnson, laughing, "I cannot answer that: that is too much for me."

I observed, that wine did some people harm, by inflaming, confusing, and irritating their minds: but that the experience of mankind had declared in favour of moderate drinking. JOHNSON. "Sir, I do not say it is wrong to produce self-complacency by drinking; I only deny that it improves the mind. When I drank wine,¹ I scorned to drink it when in company. I have drunk many a bottle by myself; in the first place, because I had need of it to raise my spirits; in the second place, because I would have nobody to witness its effects upon me."²

¹ At one period of his life, however, he was reconciled to the bottle. Sweet wines were his chief favourites; when none of these were before him, he would sometimes drink port with a lump of sugar in every glass. The strongest liquors, and in very large quantities, produced no other effect on him than moderate exhilaration. Once, and but once, he is known to have had his dose; a circumstance which he himself discovered, on finding one of his sesquipedalian words hang fire; he then started up, and gravely observed,—“I think it time we should go to bed. After a ten years’ forbearance of every fluid except tea and sherbet, I drank,” said he, “one glass of wine to the health of Sir Joshua Reynolds, on the evening of the day on which he was knighted. I never swallowed another drop, till old Madeira was prescribed to me as a cordial during my present indisposition; but this liquor did not relish as formerly, and I therefore discontinued it.”—HAWKINS.

² I must observe, on the assertion made there by Mrs. Piozzi, “that the paper on Procrastination was written in Sir Joshua Reynolds’s parlour;”—that both she and Mr. Boswell appear to have been in error as to the date of the acquaintance between Sir Joshua and Dr Johnson. “The Rambler” was ended before they could have been acquainted.—C.

He told us, "almost all his *Ramblers* were written just as they were wanted for the press ; that he sent a certain portion of the copy of an essay, and wrote the remainder, while the former part of it was printing. When it was wanted, and he had fairly sat down to it, he was sure it would be done."

He said, that for general improvement, a man should read whatever his immediate inclination prompts him to ; though, to be sure, if a man has a science to learn, he must regularly and resolutely advance. He added, "What we read with inclination makes a much stronger impression. If we read without inclination, half the mind is employed in fixing the attention ; so there is but one half to be employed on what we read." He told us, he read Fielding's "*Amelia*" through without stopping.¹ He said, "If a man begins to read in the middle of a book, and feels an inclination to go on, let him not quit it, to go to the beginning. He may, perhaps, not feel again the inclination."

Sir Joshua mentioned Mr. Cumberland's "*Odes*," which were just published. JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, they would have been thought as good as odes commonly are, if Cumberland had not put his name to them ; but a name immediately draws censure, unless it be a name that bears down everything before it. Nay, Cumberland has made his '*Odes*' subsidiary to the fame of another man.' They might have run well enough by themselves ; but he has not only loaded them with a name, but has made them carry double."

We talked of the reviews, and Dr. Johnson spoke of them as he did at Thrale's. Sir Joshua said, what I have often thought, that he wondered to find so much good writing employed in them, when the authors were to remain unknown, and so could not have the motive of fame. JOHNSON. "Nay, Sir, those who write in them, write well, in order to be paid well."

¹ We have here an involuntary testimony to the excellence of this admirable writer, to whom we have seen that Dr. Johnson *directly* allowed so little merit.—B. Johnson appears to have been particularly pleased with the character of the heroine of this novel. "His attention to veracity," says Mrs. Piozzi, "was without equal or example;" and when I mentioned *Clarissa* as a perfect character, "On the contrary," said he, "you may observe there is always something which she prefers to truth." "Fielding's *Amelia* was the most pleasing heroine of all the romances," he said ; "but that vile broken nose, never cured, retarded the sale of perhaps the only book, of which, being printed off (*published* ?) betwixt one morning, a new edition was called for before night."—*Anecdotes*, p. 221.—M.

² M. Romney, the painter, who has now deservedly established a high reputation.

LETTER 246.

TO MISS REYNOLDS.

"April 15, 1776.

"DEAREST MADAM,—when you called on Mrs. Thrale, I find by enquiry that she was really abroad. The same thing happened to Mrs. Montagu, of which I beg you to inform her, for she went likewise by my opinion. The denial, if it had been feigned, would not have pleased me. Your visits, however, are kindly paid, and very kindly taken. We are going to Bath this morning; but I could not part without telling you the real state of your visit.—I am, dearest madam, &c.

"SAM. JOHNSON."

Soon after this day, he went to Bath with Mr. and Mrs. Thrale. I had never seen that beautiful city, and wished to take the opportunity of visiting it while Johnson was there. Having written to him, I received the following answer :—

LETTER 247.

TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"DEAR SIR,—Why do you talk of neglect? When did I neglect you? If you will come to Bath, we shall all be glad to see you. Come, therefore, as soon as you can.—But I have a little business for you at London. Bid Francis look in the paper drawer of the chest of drawers in my bed-chamber, for two cases; one for the attorney-general, and one for the solicitor-general. They lie I think, at the top of my papers; otherwise they are somewhere else, and will give me more trouble.

"Please to write to me immediately, if they can be found. Make my compliments to all our friends round the world, and to Mrs. Williams at home.—I am, Sir, your, etc.

"SAM JOHNSON.

"Search for the papers as soon as you can, that, if it is necessary, I may write to you again before you come down."

On the 26th April, I went to Bath; and on my arrival at the Pelican inn, found lying for me an obliging invitation from Mr. and Mrs. Thrale, by whom I was agreeably entertained almost constantly during my stay. They were gone to the rooms; but there was a kind note from Dr. Johnson, that he should sit at home all the evening. I went to him directly; and before Mr. and Mrs. Thrale returned, we had by ourselves some hours of tea-drinking and talk.

I shall group together such of his sayings as I preserved during the few days that I was at Bath.

Of a person¹ who differed from him in politics, he said, "In

¹ Mr. Burke.—C.

private life he is a very honest gentleman ; but I will not allow him to be so in public life. People *may* be honest, though they are doing wrong : that is between their Maker and them. But *we*, who are suffering by their pernicious conduct, are to destroy them. We are sure that [Burke] acts from interest. We know what his genuine principles were.¹ They who allow their passions to confound the distinctions between right and wrong, are criminal. They may be convinced : but they have not come honestly by their conviction."

It having been mentioned, I know not with what truth, that a certain female political writer,² whose doctrines he disliked, had of late become very fond of dress, sat hours together at her toilet, and even put on rouge : JOHNSON. "She is better employed at her toilet, than using her pen. It is better she should be reddening her own cheeks, than blackening other people's characters."

He told us that "Addison wrote Budgell's papers in the Spectator, at least mended them so much that he made them almost his own ; and that Draper, Tonson's partner, assured Mrs. Johnson, that the much admired Epilogue to 'The Distressed Mother,' which came out in Budgell's name, was in reality written by Addison."

"The mode of government by one may be ill adapted to a small society, but is best for a great nation. The characteristic of our own government at present is imbecility. The magistrates dare not call the guards for fear of being hanged. The guards will not come for fear of being given up to the blind rage of popular juries."

Of the father³ of one of our friends he observed, "He never clarified his notions, by filtrating them through other minds. He had a canal upon his estate, where at one place the bank was too low. I dug the canal deeper," said he.

He told me that "so long ago as 1748, he had read 'The Grave,' a Poem,⁴ but did not like it much." I differed from him ; for

¹ He means, that, in earlier life, they, at the Club, knew that Burke was not what Johnson would call a Whig. Mr. Burke ended as he began—

"This sun of empire, where he rose, he set!"—C.

² Mrs. Macaulay.—C.

The elder Mr. Langton.—*Hawk. Mem.*

⁴ I am sorry that there are no memoirs of the Rev. Robert Blair, the author of this poem. He was the representative of the ancient family of Blair of Blair, in Ayrshire ; but the estate had descended to a female, and afterwards passed to the son of her husband by another mar-

though it is not equal throughout, and is seldom elegantly correct, it abounds in solemn thought and poetical imagery beyond the common reach. The world has differed from him; for the poem has passed through many editions, and is still much read by people of a serious cast of mind.

A literary lady of large fortune was mentioned, as one who did good to many, but by no means "by stealth;" and instead of "blushing to find it fame," acted evidently from vanity. JOHNSON "I have seen no beings who do as much good from benevolence, as she does, from whatever motive. If there are such under the earth, or in the clouds, I wish they would come up, or come down. What Soame Jenyns says upon this subject is not to be minded; he is a wit. No, Sir; to act from pure benevolence is not possible for finite beings. Human benevolence is mingled with vanity, interest, or some other motive."¹

He would not allow me to praise a lady then at Bath; observing, "She does not gain upon me, Sir; I think her empty-headed." He was indeed, a stern critic upon characters and manners. Even Mrs. Thrale did not escape his friendly animadversion at times. When he and I were one day endeavouring to ascertain, article by article, how one of our friends² could possibly spend as much money in his family as he told us he did, she interrupted us by a lively extravagant sally, on the expense of clothing his children, describing it in a very ludicrous and fanciful manner. Johnson looked a little angry, and said, "Nay, Madam, when you are declaiming, declaim; and when you are calculating, calculate." At another time, when she said, perhaps affectedly, "I don't like to fly." JOHNSON. "With *your* wings, Madam, you *must* fly: but have a care, there are *clippers*

riage. He was minister of the parish of Athelstaneford, where Mr. John Home was his successor; so that it may truly be called classic ground. His son, who is of the same name, and a man eminent for talents and learning, is now, with universal approbation, solicitor-general of Scotland.—B.

¹ The pension which Mrs. Montagu had lately settled on Miss Williams, would naturally account for this defence of that lady's beneficence, but it seems also to have induced Johnson to speak of her intellectual powers in a strain of panegyric as excessive as his former depreciation. Miss Reynolds relates, that she had heard him speak of Mrs. Montagu in terms of high admiration. "Sir," he would say, "that lady exerts more *mind* in conversation than any person I ever met with: Sir, she displays such powers of ratiocination—such radiations of intellectual excellence as are amazing!"—C.

² Mr. Langton.—C.

abroad.”¹ How very well was this said, and how fully has experience proved the truth of it! But have they not *clipped* rather *rudely* and gone a great deal *closer* than was necessary? ²

A gentleman expressed a wish to go and live three years at Otaheité, or New Zealand, in order to obtain a full acquaintance with people so totally different from all that we have ever known, and be satisfied what pure nature can do for man. JOHNSON. “What could you learn, Sir? What can savages tell, but what they themselves have seen? Of the past or the invisible they can tell nothing. The inhabitants of Otaheité and New Zealand are not in a state of pure nature; for it is plain they broke off from some other people. Had they grown out of the ground, you might have judged of a state of pure nature. Fanciful people may talk of a mythology being amongst them; but it must be invention. They have once had religion, which has been gradually debased. And what account of their religion can you suppose to be learnt from savages? Only consider, Sir, our own state: our religion is in a book; we have an order of men whose duty it is to teach it; we have one day in the week set apart for it, and this is in general pretty well observed: yet ask the first ten gross men you meet, and hear what they can tell of their religion.”

¹ But though Dr. Johnson would, as Mrs. Piozzi has candidly confessed, treat her with occasional rudeness, he had a most sincere and tender regard for her, and no wonder; for she would, with great consideration and kindness, overlook his foibles and his asperities. One day, at her own table, he spoke so very roughly to her, that every one present was surprised that she could bear it so placidly; and on the ladies withdrawing, I expressed great astonishment that Dr. Johnson should speak so harshly to her, but to this she said no more than “*O, dear good man!*” This simple reply appeared so strong a proof of her generous and affectionate friendship, that I took the first opportunity of communicating it to Dr. Johnson, repeating her own animadversions which had produced it. He was much delighted with the information; and some time after, as he was lying back in his chair, seeming to be half asleep, but really, as it turned out, musing on this pleasing incident, he repeated, in a loud whisper, “*O, dear good man!*” This kind of soliloquy was a common habit of his, when any thing very flattering or very extraordinary engrossed his *thoughts*.—MISS REYNOLDS, *Recol.*

² This alludes to the many sarcastic observations published against Mrs. Piozzi, on her lamentable marriage, and particularly to Baretti's brutal strictures in the *European Magazine* for 1788; so brutal, that even Mr. Boswell, with all his enmity towards her, could not approve of them.—C.

CHAPTER XII.

1776.

Excursion to Bristol—Rowley's Poems—Chatterton—Garriek's "Archer"—Brute Creation—Chesterfield's "Letters"—"To be, or not to be"—Luxury—Oglethorpe—Lord Elibank—Conversation—Egotism—Dr. Oldfield—Commentators on the Bible—Lord Thurlow—Sir John Pringle—Dinner at Mr. Dilly's—John Wilkes—Foote's Mimicry—Garriek's Wit—Biography—Cibber's Plays—"Difficile est propriè," &c.—City Poets—"Diabolus Regis"—Lord Bute—Mrs. Knowles—Mrs. Rudd.

ON Monday, April 29, he and I made an excursion to Bristol, where I was entertained with seeing him inquire upon the spot into the authenticity of "Rowley's poetry," as I had seen him inquire upon the spot into the authenticity of "Ossian's poetry." George Catcott, the pewterer, who was as zealous for Rowley as Dr. Hugh Blair was for Ossian (I trust my reverend friend will excuse the comparison,) attended us at our inn, and with a triumphant air of lively simplicity, called out, "I'll make Dr. Johnson a convert." Dr. Johnson, at his desire, read aloud some of Chatterton's fabricated verses ; while Catcott stood at the back of his chair, moving himself like a pendulum, and beating time with his feet, and now and then looking into Dr. Johnson's face, wondering that he was not yet convinced. We called on Mr. Barret, the surgeon, and saw some of the *originals*, as they were called, which were executed very artificially ; but from a careful inspection of them, and a consideration of the circumstances with which they were attended, we were quite satisfied of the imposture, which, indeed, has been clearly demonstrated, from internal evidence, by several able critics.¹

Honest Catcott seemed to pay no attention whatever to any objections, but insisted, as an end of all controversy, that we should go with him to the tower of the church of St. Mary, Redcliff, and *view with our own eyes* the ancient chest in which the manuscripts

¹ Mr. Tyrwhitt, Mr. Warton, Mr. Malone.

were found.¹ To this Dr. Johnson good-naturedly agreed; and, though troubled with a shortness of breathing, laboured up a long flight of steps, till we came to the place where the wondrous chest stood. “*There*,” said Catcot, with a bouncing confident credulity, “*there* is the very chest itself.” After this *ocular demonstration*, there was no more to be said. He brought to my recollection a Scotch Highlander, a man of learning too, and who had seen the world, attesting, and at the same time giving his reasons for, the authenticity of Fingal: “I have heard all that poem when I was young.” “Have you, Sir? Pray what have you heard?” “I have heard Ossian, Oscar, and *every one of them*.”

Johnson said of Chatterton, “This is the most extraordinary young man that has encountered my knowledge. It is wonderful how the whelp has written such things.”²

We were by no means pleased with our inn at Bristol. “Let us see now,” said I, “how we should describe it:” Johnson was ready with his raillery “Describe it, Sir? Why, it was so bad, that—Boswell wished to be in Scotland!”

After Dr. Johnson returned to London [May 4th] I was several times with him at his house, where I occasionally slept, in the room that had been assigned for me. I dined with him at Dr. Taylor’s, at General Oglethorpe’s, and at General Paoli’s. To avoid a tedious minuteness, I shall group together what I have preserved of his conversation during this period also, without specifying each scene where it passed, except one, which will be found so remarkable as certainly to deserve a very particular relation. Where the place or the persons do not contribute to the zest of the conversation, it is unnecessary to encumber my page with mentioning them. To know of what vintage our wine is, enables us to judge of its value, and to drink it with more relish; but to have the produce of each vine

¹ This *naïveté* resembles the style of evidence which Johnson so pleasantly ridicules in the *Idler*, No. 10. “Jack Sneaker is a hearty adherent to the protestant establishment; he has known those who saw the bed into which the Pretender was conveyed in a warming pan.”—C.

² Of the merit of the poems admitted on both sides of the controversy, he said, “It is a sword that cuts both ways. It is as wonderful that a boy of sixteen years old should have stored his mind with such a strain of ideas and images, as to suppose that such ease of verification and elegance of language were produced by Rowley in the time of Edward the Fourth.”—HAWKINS.

of one vineyard, in the same year, kept separate, would serve no purpose. To know that our wine (to use an advertising phrase) is "of the stock of an ambassador lately deceased," heightens its flavour : but it signifies nothing to know the bin where each bottle was once deposited.

"Garrick," he observed, "does not play the part of Archer in the 'Beaux Stratagem' well. The gentleman should break through the footman, which is not the case as he does it."¹

"Where there is no education, as in savage countries, men will have the upper hand of women. Bodily strength, no doubt, contributes to this ; but it would be so, exclusive of that ; for it is mind that always governs. When it comes to dry understanding, man has the better."

"The little volumes entitled, '*Respublica*,'² which are very well done, were a bookseller's work."

"There is much talk of the misery which we cause to the brute creation ; but they are recompensed by existence. If they were not useful to man, and therefore protected by him, they would not be nearly so numerous." This argument is to be found in the able and benignant Hutchinson's "*Moral Philosophy*." But the question is, whether the animals who endure such sufferings of various kinds, for the service and entertainment of man, would accept of existence upon the terms on which they have it. Madame de Sévigné, who, though she had many enjoyments, felt with delicate sensibility the prevalence of misery, complains of the task of existence having been imposed upon her without her consent.

"That man is never happy for the present is so true, that all his relief from unhappiness is only forgetting himself for a little while. Life is a progress from want to want, not from enjoyment to enjoyment."

"Though many men are nominally intrusted with the administration of hospitals and other public institutions, almost all the good is done by one man, by whom the rest are driven on ; owing to confidence in him and indolence in them."

¹ Garrick, on the other hand, denied that Johnson was capable of distinguishing the *gentleman* from the *footman*. See *anti*, p. 98.—C.

² Accounts of the principal States of Europe.—C.

"Lord Chesterfield's Letters to his Son,¹ I think, might be made a very pretty book. Take out the immorality, and it should be put into the hands of every young gentleman. An elegant manner and easiness of behaviour are acquired gradually and imperceptibly. No man can say, 'I'll be genteel.' There are ten genteel women for one genteel man, because they are more restrained. A man without some degree of restraint is insufferable; but, we are all less restrained than women. Were a woman sitting in company to put out her legs before her as most men do, we should be tempted to kick them in." No man was a more attentive and nice observer of behaviour in those in whose company he happened to be than Johnson, or, however strange it may seem to many, had a higher estimation of its refinements.²

Lord Elliot informs me, that one day when Johnson and he were at dinner in a gentleman's house in London, upon Lord Chesterfield's Letters being mentioned, Johnson surprised the company by this sentence: "Every man of any education would rather be called a rascal, than accused of deficiency in *the graces*." Mr. Gibbon, who was present, turned to a lady who knew Johnson well, and lived much with him, and in his quaint manner, tapping his box, addressed her thus: "Don't you think, Madam (looking towards Johnson), that among *all* your acquaintance, you could find *one* exception?" The lady smiled, and seemed to acquiesce.³

¹ "A pretty book" was made up from these letters by the late Dr. Trusler, entitled "*Principles of Politeness*."—HALL.

² I one day commended a young lady for her beauty and pretty behaviour, to whom she thought no objections could have been made. "I saw her (says Dr. Johnson) take a pair of scissors in her left hand; and, although her father is now become a nobleman, and as you say excessively rich, I should, were I a youth of quality ten years hence, hesitate between a girl so neglected and a *negro*."—Prozzi. "The child who took a pair of scissors in her left hand is now a woman of quality, highly respected, and would *cut* us, I conclude, most deservedly, if more were said on the subject."—Prozzi *MS*. I believe that the lady was the eldest daughter of Mr. Lyttelton, afterwards Lord Westcote, married to Sir Richard Hoare. She was born in Jamaica, and thence, perhaps, Johnson's strange allusion to the *negro*.—C.

³ Colman, in his "*Random Records*," has given a lively sketch of the appearance and manners of Johnson and Gibbon in society:—

"The learned Gibbon was a curious counterbalance to the learned (may I not say less learned?) Johnson. Their manners and taste, both in writing and conversation, were as different as their habiliments. On the day I first sat down with Johnson, in his rusty brown suit, and his black worsted stockings, Gibbon was placed opposite to me in a suit of flowered velvet, with a bag and sword. Each had his measured phraseology; and Johnson's famous

"I read," said he, "Sharpe's Letters on Italy over again, when I was at Bath. There is a great deal of matter in them."

"Mrs. Williams was angry that Thrale's family did not send regularly to her every time they heard from me while I was in the Hebrides. Little people are apt to be jealous : but they should not be jealous ; for they ought to consider, that superior attention will necessarily be paid to superior fortune or rank. Two persons may have equal merit, and on that account may have an equal claim to attention ; but one of them may have also fortune and rank, and so may have a double claim."

Talking of his notes on Shakspeare, he said, "I despise those who do not see that I am right in the passage, where *as* is repeated, and 'asses of great charge' introduced. That on 'To be, or not to be,' is disputable."¹

A gentleman, whom I found sitting with him one morning, said, that in his opinion the character of an infidel was more detestable than that of a man notoriously guilty of an atrocious crime. I differed from him, because we are surer of the odiousness of the one, than of the error of the other. JOHNSON. "Sir, I agree with him ; for the infidel would be guilty of any crime if he were inclined to it."

"Many things which are false are transmitted from book to book, and gain credit in the world. One of these is the cry against the evil of luxury. Now the truth is, that luxury produces much good. Take the luxury of buildings in London. Does it not produce real advantage in the conveniency and elegance of accommodation, and

parallel between Dryden and Pope, might be loosely parodied, in reference to himself and Gibbon : Johnson's style was grand, and Gibbon's elegant : the stateliness of the former was sometimes pedantic, and the latter was occasionally finical. Johnson marched to kettle-drums and trumpets ; Gibbon moved to flutes and hautboys : Johnson hewed passages through the Alps, while Gibbon levelled walks through parks and gardens. Mauled as I had been by Johnson, Gibbon poured balm upon my bruises by condescending, once or twice in the course of the evening, to talk with me ; the great historian was light and playful, suiting his matter to the capacity of the boy ; but it was done *more suo* ;—still his mannerism prevailed ; still, he tapped his snuff-box ; still he smirked and smiled, and rounded his periods with the same air of good-breeding, as if he were conversing with men. His mouth, mellifluous as Plato's, was a round hole nearly in the centre of his visage." Vol. I. p. 121.—C.

¹ It may be observed, that Mr. Malone, in his very valuable edition of Shakspeare, has fully vindicated Dr. Johnson from the idle censures which the first of these notes has given rise to. The interpretation of the other passage, which Dr. Johnson allows to be *disputable*, he has clearly shown to be erroneous.—B.

this all from the exertion of industry? People will tell you, with a melancholy face, how many builders are in gaol. It is plain they are in gaol, not for building; for rents are not fallen. A man gives half-a-guinea for a dish of green peas. How much gardening does this occasion? how many labourers must the competition to have such things early in the market keep in employment? You will hear it said, very gravely, 'Why was not the half-guinea, thus spent in luxury, given to the poor? To how many might it have afforded a good meal?' Alas! has it not gone to the *industrious* poor, whom it is better to support than the *idle* poor? You are much surer that you are doing good when you *pay* money to those who work, as the recompence of their labour, than when you *give* money merely in charity. Suppose the ancient luxury of a dish of peacock's brain were to be revived, how many carcasses would be left to the poor at a cheap rate! and as to the rout that is made about people who are ruined by extravagance, it is no matter to the nation that some individuals suffer. When so much general productive exertion is the consequence of luxury, the nation does not care though there are debtors in gaol: nay, they would not care though their creditors were there too."

The uncommon vivacity of General Oglethorpe's mind, and variety of knowledge, having sometimes made his conversation seem too desultory; Johnson observed, "Oglethorpe, Sir, never *completes* what he has to say."

He on the same account made a similar remark on Patrick Lord Elibank; "Sir, there is nothing *conclusive* in his talk."

When I complained of having dined at a splendid table without hearing one sentence of conversation worthy of being remembered, he said, "Sir, there seldom is any such conversation." BOSWELL. "Why then meet at table?" JOHNSON. "Why, to eat and drink together, and to promote kindness; and, Sir, this is better done when there is no solid conversation: for when there is, people differ in opinion, and get into bad humour, or some of the company, who are not capable of such conversation, are left out, and feel themselves uneasy. It was for this reason Sir Robert Walpole said, he *always talked bawdy at his table*, because in that all could join."

Being irritated by hearing a gentleman ask Mr Levet a variety

of questions concerning him, when he was sitting by, he broke out, "Sir, you have but two topics, yourself and me. I am sick of both." "A man," said he, "should not talk of himself, nor much of any particular person. He should take care not to be made a proverb; and, therefore, should avoid having any one topic of which people can say, 'We shall hear him upon it.' There was a Dr. Oldfield, who was always talking of the Duke of Marlborough. He came into a coffeehouse one day, and told that his grace had spoken in the House of Lords for half an hour. 'Did he indeed speak for half an hour?' (said Belchier, the surgeon)—'Yes.'—'And what did he say of Dr. Oldfield?'—'Nothing.'—'Why, then, Sir, he was very ungrateful; for Dr. Oldfield could not have spoken for a quarter of an hour, without saying something of him.'"

"Every man is to take existence on the terms on which it is given to him. To some men it is given on condition of not taking liberties, which other men may take without much harm. One may drink wine, and be nothing the worse for it: on another, wine may have effects so inflammatory as to injure him both in body and mind, and perhaps make him commit something for which he may deserve to be hanged."

"Lord Hailes's 'Annals of Scotland' have not that painted form which is the taste of this age; but it is a book which will always sell, it has such a stability of dates, such a certainty of facts, and such a punctuality of citation. I never before read Scotch history with certainty."

I asked him whether he would advise me to read the Bible with a commentary, and what commentaries he would recommend. JOHNSON. "To be sure, Sir, I would have you read the Bible with a commentary; and I would recommend Lowth and Patrick on the Old Testament, and Hammond on the New."

During my stay in London this spring, I solicited his attention to another law case, in which I was engaged. In the course of a contested election for the Borough of Dunfermline, which I attended as one of my friend Colonel (afterwards Sir Archibald) Campbell's counsel, one of his political agents—who was charged with having been unfaithful to his employer, and having deserted to the opposite party for a pecuniary reward—attacked very rudely in the newspapers the

Rev. Mr. James Thomson, one of the ministers of that place, on account of a supposed allusion to him in one of his sermons. Upon this the minister, on a subsequent Sunday, arraigned him by name from the pulpit with some severity ; and the agent, after the sermon was over, rose up and asked the minister aloud, "What bribe he had received for telling so many lies from the chair of verity ?" I was present at this very extraordinary scene. The person arraigned, and his father and brother, who also had a share both of the reproof from the pulpit and in the retaliation, brought an action against Mr. Thomson, in the Court of Session, for defamation and damages, and I was one of the counsel for the reverend defendant. The liberty of the pulpit was our great ground of defence : but we argued also on the provocation of the previous attack, and on the instant retaliation. The court of Session, however,—the fifteen judges, who are at the same time the jury,—decided against the minister, contrary to my humble opinion ; and several of them expressed themselves with indignation against him. He was an aged gentleman, formerly a military chaplain, and a man of high spirit and honour. Johnson was satisfied that the judgment was wrong, and dictated to me, in confutation of it, the following Argument :¹

¹ ARGUMENT IN FAVOUR OF MR. JAMES THOMSON, MINISTER OF DUNFERMLINE. — "Of the censure pronounced from the pulpit, our determination must be formed, as in other cases, by a consideration of the act itself, and the particular circumstances with which it is invested.

"The right of censure and rebuke seems necessarily appendant to the pastoral office. He, to whom the care of a congregation is intrusted, is considered as the shepherd of a flock, as the teacher of a school, as the father of a family. As a shepherd tending not his own sheep but those of his master, he is answerable for those that stray, and that lose themselves by straying. But no man can be answerable for losses which he has not power to prevent, or for vagrancy which he has not authority to restrain.

"As a teacher giving instruction for wages, and liable to reproach, if those whom he undertakes to inform make no proficiency, he must have the power of enforcing attendance, of awakening negligence, and repressing contradiction.

"As a father, he possesses the paternal authority of admonition, rebuke, and punishment. He cannot, without reducing his office to an empty name, be hindered from the exercise of any practice necessary to stimulate the idle, to reform the vicious, to check the petulant, and correct the stubborn.

"If we enquire into the practice of the primitive church, we shall, I believe, find the ministers of the word exercising the whole authority of this complicated character. We shall find them not only encouraging the good by exhortation, but terrifying the wicked by reproof and denunciation. In the earliest ages of the church, while religion was yet pure from secular advantages, the punishment of sinners was public censure and open penance : penalties inflicted merely by ecclesiastical authority, at a time while the church had yet no help from the civil power, while the hand of the magistrate lifted only the rod of perse-

When I read this to Mr. Burke, he was highly pleased, and

cution, and when governors were ready to afford a refuge to all those who fled from clerical authority.

"That the church, therefore, had once a power of public censure, is evident, because that power was frequently exercised. That it borrowed not its power from the civil authority, is likewise certain, because civil authority was at that time its enemy.

"The hour came, at length, when, after three hundred years of struggle and distress, Truth took possession of imperial power, and the civil laws lent their aid to the ecclesiastical constitutions. The magistrates from that time co-operated with the priest, and clerical sentences were made efficacious by secular force. But the state, when it came to the assistance of the church, had no intention to diminish its authority. Those rebukes and those censures which were lawful before, were lawful still. But they had hitherto operated only upon voluntary submission. The refractory and contemptuous were at first in no danger of temporal severities, except what they might suffer from the reproaches of conscience, or the detestation of their fellow Christians. When religion obtained the support of law, if admonitions and censures had no effect, they were seconded by the magistrates with coercion and punishment.

"It therefore appears, from ecclesiastical history, that the right of inflicting shame by public censure has been always considered as inherent in the church; and that this right was not conferred by the civil power; for it was exercised when the civil power operated against it. By the civil power it was never taken away; for the Christian magistrate interposed his office, not to rescue sinners from censure, but to supply more powerful means of reformation; to add pain where shame was insufficient; and, when men were proclaimed unworthy of the society of the faithful, to restrain them by imprisonment from spreading abroad the contagion of wickedness.

"It is not improbable, that from this acknowledged power of public censure grew, in time, the practice of auricular confession. Those who dreaded the blast of public reprehension were willing to submit themselves to the priest by a private accusation of themselves, and to obtain a reconciliation with the church by a kind of clandestine absolution and invisible penance; conditions with which the priest would, in times of ignorance and corruption, easily comply, as they increased his influence, by adding the knowledge of secret sins to that of notorious offences, and enlarged his authority, by making him the sole arbiter of the terms of reconciliation.

"From this bondage the Reformation set us free. The minister has no longer power to press into the retirements of conscience, to torture us by interrogatories, or put himself in possession of our secrets and our lives. But though we have thus controlled his usurpations, his just and original power remains unimpaired. He may still see, though he may not pry; he may yet hear, though he may not question. And that knowledge which his eyes and ears force upon him it is still his duty to use, for the benefit of his flock. A father who lives near a wicked neighbour may forbid his son to frequent his company. A minister who has in his congregation a man of open and scandalous wickedness may warn his parishioners to shun his conversation. To warn them is not only lawful, but not to warn them would be criminal. He may warn them one by one in friendly converse, or by a parochial visitation. But if he may warn each man singly, what shall forbid him to warn them altogether? Of that which is to be made known to all, how is there any difference whether it be communicated to each singly, or to all together? What is known to all must necessarily be public. Whether it shall be public at once, or public by degrees, is the only question. And of a sudden and solemn publication the impression is deeper and the warning more effectual.

"It may easily be urged, if a minister be thus left at liberty to delate sinners from the pulpit, and to publish at will the crimes of a parishioner, he may often blast the innocent, and distress the timorous. He may be suspicious, and condemn without evidence; he may be rash, and judge without examination; he may be severe, and treat slight offences with too

exclaimed, "Well, he does his work in a workman-like manner."¹

Mr. Thomson wished to bring the cause by appeal before the House of Lords, but was dissuaded by the advice of the noble person who

much harshness; he may be malignant and partial, and gratify his private interest or resentment under the shelter of his pastoral character.

"Of all this there is possibility, and of all this there is danger. But if possibility of evil be to exclude good, no good ever can be done. If nothing is to be attempted in which there is danger, we must all sink into hopeless inactivity. The evils that may be feared from this practice arise, not from any defect in the institution, but from the infirmities of human nature. Power, in whatever hands it is placed, will be sometimes improperly exerted; yet courts of law must judge, though they will sometimes judge amiss. A father must instruct his children, though he himself may often want instruction. A minister must censure sinners, though his censure may be sometimes erroneous by want of judgment, and sometimes unjust by want of honesty.

"If we examine the circumstances of the present case, we shall find the sentence neither erroneous nor unjust; we shall find no breach of private confidence, no intrusion into secret transactions. The fact was notorious and indubitable; so easy to be proved, that no proof was desired. The act was base and treacherous, the perpetration insolent and open, and the example naturally mischievous. The minister, however, being retired and recluse, had not yet heard what was publicly known throughout the parish; and, on occasion of a public election, warned his people, according to his duty, against the crimes which public elections frequently produce. His warning was felt by one of his parishioners as pointed particularly at himself. But instead of producing, as might be wished, private compunction and immediate reformation, it kindled only rage and resentment. He charged his minister, in a public paper, with scandal, defamation, and falsehood. The minister, thus reproached, had his own character to vindicate, upon which his pastoral authority must necessarily depend. To be charged with a defamatory lie is an injury which no man patiently endures in common life. To be charged with polluting the pastoral office with scandal and falsehood was a violation of character still more atrocious, as it affected not only his personal, but his clerical veracity. His indignation naturally rose in proportion to his honesty, and, with all the fortitude of injured honesty, he dared this calumniator in the church, and at once exonerated himself from censure, and rescued his flock from deception and danger. The man whom he accuses pretends not to be innocent; or, at least, only pretends, for he declines a trial. The crime of which he is accused has frequent opportunities and strong temptations. It has already spread far, with much depravation of private morals, and much injury to public happiness. To warn the people, therefore, against it was not wanton and officious, but necessary and pastoral.

"What, then, is the fault with which this worthy minister is charged? He has usurped no dominion over conscience. He has exerted no authority in support of doubtful and controverted opinions. He has not dragged into light a bashful and corrigible sinner. His censure was directed against a breach of morality, against an act which no man justifies. The man who appropriated this censure to himself is evidently and notoriously guilty. His consciousness of his own wickedness incited him to attack his faithful reprover with open insolence and printed accusations. Such an attack made defence necessary; and we hope it will be at last decided that the means of defence were just and lawful."

¹ As a proof of Dr. Johnson's extraordinary powers of composition, it appears from the original manuscript of this excellent dissertation, of which he dictated the first eight paragraphs on the 10th of May, and the remainder on the 18th, that there are in the whole only seven corrections, or rather variations, and those not considerable. Such were at once the vigorous and accurate emanations of his mind.

lately presided so ably in that most honourable house, and who was then attorney-general. As my readers will no doubt be glad also to read the opinion of this eminent man upon the same subject, I shall here insert it.

CASE.

"There is herewith laid before you, 1. Petition for the Rev. Mr. James Thomson, minister of Dunfermline. 2. Answers thereto. 3. Copy of the judgment of the Court of Session upon both. 4. Notes of the opinions of the judges, being the reasons upon which their decree is grounded.

"These papers you will please to peruse, and give your opinion—

"Whether there is a probability of the above decree of the Court of Session being reversed, if Mr. Thomson should appeal from the same?"

"I don't think the appeal advisable; not only because the value of the judgment is in no degree adequate to the expense; but because there are many chances, that upon the general complexion of the case, the impression will be taken to the disadvantage of the appellant.

"It is impossible to approve the style of that sermon. But the *complaint* was not less ungracious from that man, who had behaved so ill by his original libel, and at the time when he received the reproach he complains of. In the last article all the plaintiffs are equally concerned. It struck me also with some wonder, that the judges should think so much fervour apposite to the occasion of reproving the defendant for a little excess.

"Upon the matter, however, I agree with them in condemning the behaviour of the minister, and in thinking it a subject fit for ecclesiastical censure; and even for an action, if any individual could qualify¹ a wrong, and a damage arising from it. But this I doubt. The circumstance of publishing the reproach in a pulpit, though extremely indecent, and culpable in another view, does not constitute a different sort of wrong, or any other rule of law than would have obtained, if the same words had been pronounced elsewhere. I don't know whether there be any difference in the law of Scotland, in the definition of slander, before the commissaries, or the Court of Session. The common law of England does not give way to actions for every reproachful word. An action cannot be brought for general damages upon any words which import less than an offence cognisable by law; consequently no action could have been brought here for the words in question. Both laws admit the truth to be a justification: in action *for words*; and the law of England does the same in actions for libels. The judgment, therefore, seems to me to have been wrong, in that the court repelled that defence.

"E. THURLOW."

¹ It is curious to observe that Lord Thurlow has here, perhaps, in compliment to North Britain, made use of a term of the Scotch law, which to an English reader may require explanation. To *qualify* a wrong, is to point out and establish it.

I am now to record a very curious incident in Dr. Johnson's life, which fell under my own observation ; of which *pars magna fui*, and which I am persuaded will, with the liberal-minded, be much to his credit.

My desire of being acquainted with celebrated men of every description had made me, much about the same time, obtain an introduction to Dr. Samuel Johnson and to John Wilkes, Esq. Two men more different could perhaps not be selected out of all mankind. They had even attacked one another with some asperity in their writings ; yet I lived in habits of friendship with both. I could fully relish the excellence of each ; for I have ever delighted in that intellectual chemistry, which can separate good qualities from evil in the same person.

Sir John Pringle, "mine own friend and my father's friend," between whom and Dr. Johnson I in vain wished to establish an acquaintance, as I respected and lived in intimacy with both of them, observed to me once, very ingeniously, "It is not in friendship as in mathematics, where two things, each equal to a third, are equal between themselves. You agree with Johnson as a middle quality, and you agree with me as a middle quality ; but Johnson and I should not agree." Sir John was not sufficiently flexible ; so I desisted ; knowing, indeed, that the repulsion was equally strong on the part of Johnson ; who, I know not from what cause, unless his being a Scotchman, had formed a very erroneous opinion of Sir John. But I conceived an irresistible wish, if possible, to bring Dr. Johnson and Mr. Wilkes together. How to manage it, was a nice and difficult matter.¹

¹ Johnson's dislike of Mr. Wilkes was so great that it extended even to his connections. He happened to dine one day at Sir Joshua Reynolds's with a large and distinguished company, amongst whom were Mr. Wilkes's brother, Israel, and his lady. In the course of conversation, Mr. Israel Wilkes was about to make some remark, when Johnson suddenly stopped him with, "I hope, Sir, what you are going to say may be better worth hearing than what you have already said." This rudeness shocked and spread a gloom over the whole party, particularly as Mr. Israel Wilkes was a gentleman of a very amiable character and of refined taste, and, what Dr. Johnson little suspected, a very loyal subject. Johnson afterwards owned to me that he was very sorry that he had "snubbed Wilkes, as his wife was present." I replied, that he should be sorry for many reasons. "No," said Johnson, who was very reluctant to apologise for offences of this nature ; "no, I only regret it because his wife was by." I believe that he had no kind of motive for this incivility to Mr. I. Wilkes but disgust at his brother's political principles.—Miss REYNOLDS'S *Recol.*

My worthy booksellers and friends, Messieurs Dilly in the Poultry, at whose hospitable and well-covered table I have seen a greater number of literary men than at any other, except that of Sir Joshua Reynolds, had invited me to meet Mr. Wilkes and some more gentlemen on Wednesday, May 15. "Pray," said I, "let us have Dr. Johnson." "What, with Mr. Wilkes? not for the world," said Mr. Edward Dilly: "Dr. Johnson would never forgive me." "Come," said I, "if you'll let me negotiate for you, I will be answerable that all shall go well." DILLY. "Nay, if you will take it upon you, I am sure I shall be very happy to see them both here."

Notwithstanding the high veneration which I entertained for Dr. Johnson, I was sensible that he was sometimes a little actuated by the spirit of contradiction, and by means of that I hoped I should gain my point. I was persuaded that if I had come upon him with a direct proposal, "Sir, will you dine in company with Jack Wilkes?" he would have flown into a passion, and would probably have answered, "Dine with Jack Wilkes, Sir! I'd as soon dine with Jack Ketch."¹ I, therefore, while we were sitting quietly by ourselves at his house in an evening, took occasion to open my plan thus: "Mr. Dilly, Sir, sends his respectful compliments to you, and would be happy if you would do him the honour to dine with him on Wednesday next along with me, as I must soon go to Scotland." JOHNSON. "Sir, I am obliged to Mr. Dilly. I will wait upon him."—BOSWELL. "Provided, Sir, I suppose, that the company which he is to have is agreeable to you?" JOHNSON. "What do you mean, Sir? What do you take me for? Do you think I am so ignorant of the world as to imagine that I am to prescribe to a gentleman what company he is to have at his table?" BOSWELL. "I beg your pardon, Sir, for wishing to prevent you from meeting people whom you might not like. Perhaps he may have some of what he calls his patriotic friends with him." JOHNSON. "Well, Sir, and what then? What care I for his *patriotic friends*? Poh!" BOSWELL. "I should not be surprised to find Jack Wilkes there." JOHNSON. "And if Jack Wilkes *should* be there, what is that to me, Sir? My dear friend, let us have no more of this. I am sorry to be angry with

¹ This has been circulated as if actually said by Johnson; when the truth is, it was only *supposed* by me.

you ; but really it is treating me strangely to talk to me as if I could not meet any company whatever, occasionally." BOSWELL. "Pray forgive me, Sir : I meant well. But you shall meet whoever comes for me." Thus I secured him, and told Dilly that he would find him very well pleased to be one of his guests on the day appointed.

Upon the much expected Wednesday, I called on him about half an hour before dinner, as I often did when we were to dine out together, to see that he was ready in time, and to accompany him. I found him buffeting his books, as upon a former occasion, covered with dust, and making no preparation for going abroad. "How is this, Sir ?" said I. "Don't you recollect that you are to dine at Mr. Dilly's ?" JOHNSON. "Sir, I did not think of going to Dilly's : it went out of my head. I have ordered dinner at home with Mrs. Williams." BOSWELL. "But, my dear Sir, you know you were engaged to Mr. Dilly, and I told him so. He will expect you, and will be much disappointed if you don't come." JOHNSON. "You must talk to Mrs. Williams about this."

Here was a sad dilemma. I feared that what I was so confident I had secured would yet be frustrated. He had accustomed himself to show Mrs. Williams such a degree of humane attention, as frequently imposed some restraint upon him ; and I knew that if she should be obstinate, he would not stir. I hastened down stairs to the blind lady's room, and told her I was in great uneasiness, for Dr. Johnson had engaged to me to dine this day at Mr. Dilly's, but that he had told me he had forgotten his engagement, and had ordered dinner at home. "Yes, Sir," said she, pretty peevishly, "Dr. Johnson is to dine at home." "Madam," said I, "his respect for you is such, that I know he will not leave you, unless you absolutely desire it. But as you have so much of his company, I hope you will be good enough to forego it for a day, as Mr. Dilly is a very worthy man, has frequently had agreeable parties at his house for Dr. Johnson, and will be vexed if the Doctor neglects him to-day. And then, Madam, be pleased to consider my situation ; I carried the message, and I assured Mr. Dilly that Dr. Johnson was to come ; and no doubt he has made a dinner, and invited a company, and boasted of the honour he expected to have. I shall be quite disgraced if the Doctor is not there." She gradually softened to my solicitations, which

were certainly as earnest as most entreaties to ladies upon any occasion, and was graciously pleased to empower me to tell Dr. Johnson, "That all things considered, she thought he should certainly go." I flew back to him, still in dust, and careless of what should be the event, "indifferent in his choice to go or stay ;" but as soon as I had announced to him Mrs. Williams's consent, he roared, "Frank, a clean shirt," and was very soon dressed. When I had him fairly seated in a hackney-coach with me, I exulted as much as a fortune-hunter who has got an heiress into a post-chaise with him to set out for Gretna Green.

When we entered Mr. Dilly's drawing room, he found himself in the midst of a company he did not know. I kept myself snug and silent, watching how he would conduct himself. I observed him whispering to Mr. Dilly, "Who is that gentleman, Sir?"—"Mr. Arthur Lee." JOHNSON. "Too, too, too" (under his breath), which was one of his habitual mutterings. Mr. Arthur Lee could not but be very obnoxious to Johnson, for he was not only a *patriot*, but an *American*. He was afterwards minister from the United States at the court of Madrid. "And who is the gentleman in lace?"—"Mr. Wilkes, Sir." This information confounded him still more ; he had some difficulty to restrain himself, and, taking up a book, sat down upon a window-seat and read, or at least kept his eye upon it intently for some time, till he composed himself. His feelings, I dare say, were awkward enough. But he had no doubt recollected his having rated me for supposing that he could be at all disconcerted by any company, and he, therefore, resolutely set himself to behave quite as an easy man of the world, who could adapt himself at once to the disposition and manners of those whom he might chance to meet.

The cheering sound of "Dinner is upon the table," dissolved his reverie, and we *all* sat down without any symptoms of ill humour. There were present, beside Mr. Wilkes and Mr. Arthur Lee, who was an old companion of mine when he studied physic at Edinburgh, Mr. (now Sir John) Miller, Dr. Lettsom, and Mr. Slater, the druggist. Mr. Wilkes placed himself next to Dr. Johnson, and behaved to him with so much attention and politeness, that he gained upon him insensibly. No man eat more heartily than Johnson, or

loved better what was nice and delicate. Mr. Wilkes was very assiduous in helping him to some fine veal. "Pray give me leave, Sir—It is better here—A little of the brown—Some fat, Sir—A little of the stuffing—Some gravy—Let me have the pleasure of giving you some butter—Allow me to recommend a squeeze of this orange ; or the lemon, perhaps, may have more zest."—"Sir ; sir, I am obliged to you, Sir," cried Johnson, bowing, and turning his head to him with a look for some time of "surly virtue,"¹ but, in a short while, of complacency.

Foote being mentioned, Johnson said, "He is not a good mimic." One of the company added, "A merry-andrew, a buffoon." JOHNSON. "But he has wit too, and is not deficient in ideas, or in fertility and variety of imagery, and not empty of reading ; he has knowledge enough to fill up his part. One species of wit he has in an eminent degree, that of escape. You drive him into a corner with both hands ; but he is gone, Sir, when you think you have got him—like an animal that jumps over your head. Then he has a great range for wit ; he never lets truth stand between him and a jest, and he is sometimes mighty coarse. Garrick is under many restraints from which Foote is free." WILKES. "Garrick's wit is more like Lord Chesterfield's." JOHNSON. "The first time I was in company with Foote was at Fitzherbert's. Having no good opinion of the fellow, I was resolved not to be pleased ; and it is very difficult to please a man against his will. I went on eating my dinner pretty sullenly, affecting not to mind him. But the dog was so very comical, that I was obliged to lay down my knife and fork, throw myself back upon my chair, and fairly laugh it out. No, Sir, he was irresistible."² He upon one occasion experienced, in an extraordinary degree, the efficacy of his powers of entertaining. Amongst the many and various modes which he tried of getting money, he became a partner with a small-beer brewer, and he was to have a share of the profits for procuring customers amongst his numerous acquaintance. Fitzherbert was one who took his small-

¹ "How, when competitors like these contend,
Can *surly virtue* hope to fix a friend."—*LONDON*.

² Foote told me that Johnson said of him, "For loud, obstreperous, broad-faced mirth, I know not his equal."

beer, but it was so bad that the servants resolved not to drink it. They were at some loss how to notify their resolution, being afraid of offending their master, who they knew liked Foote much as a companion. At last they fixed upon a little black boy, who was rather a favourite, to be their deputy, and deliver their remonstrance; and, having invested him with the whole authority of the kitchen, he was to inform Mr. Fitzherbert, in all their names, upon a certain day, that they would drink Foote's small-beer no longer. On that day Foote happened to dine at Fitzherbert's, and this boy served at table; he was so delighted with Foote's stories, and merriment, and grimace, that when he went down stairs, he told them, 'This is the finest man I have ever seen. I will not deliver your message. I will drink his small-beer.'

Somebody observed that Garrick could not have done this. WILKES. "Garrick would have made the small-beer still smaller. He is now leaving the stage; but he will play *Scrub* all his life." I knew that Johnson would let nobody attack Garrick but himself, as Garrick said to me, and I had heard him praise his liberality; so to bring out his commendation of his celebrated pupil, I said, loudly, "I have heard Garrick is liberal." JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir, I know that Garrick has given away more money than any man in England that I am acquainted with, and that not from ostentatious views. Garrick was very poor when he began life; so when he came to have money, he probably was very unskilful in giving away, and saved when he should not. But Garrick began to be liberal as soon as he could; and I am of opinion, the reputation of avarice which he has had has been very lucky for him, and prevented his having made enemies. You despise a man for avarice, but do not hate him. Garrick might have been much better attacked for living with more splendour than is suitable to a player; if they had had the wit to have assaulted him in that quarter, they might have galled him more. But they have kept clamouring about his avarice, which has rescued him from much obloquy and envy."

Talking of the great difficulty of obtaining authentic information for biography, Johnson told us—"When I was a young fellow, I wanted to write the 'Life of Dryden,' and, in order to get materials, I applied to the only two persons then alive who had seen him;

these were old Swinney,¹ and old Cibber. Swinney's information was no more than this, 'That at Will's coffee-house Dryden had a particular chair for himself, which was set by the fire in winter, and was then called his winter chair; and that it was carried out for him to the balcony in summer, and was then called his summer chair.' Cibber could tell no more but 'That he remembered him a decent old man, arbiter of critical disputes at Will's.' You are to consider that Cibber was then at a great distance from Dryden, had perhaps one leg only in the room, and durst not draw in the other." BOSWELL. "Yet Cibber was a man of observation?" JOHNSON. "I think not." BOSWELL. "You will allow his 'Apology' to be well done." JOHNSON. "Very well done, to be sure, Sir. That book is a striking proof of the justice of Pope's remark :

'Each might his several province well command,
Would all but stoop to what they understand.'

BOSWELL. "And his plays are good." JOHNSON. "Yes; but that was his trade; *l'esprit du corps*; he had been all his life among players and play-writers. I wondered that he had so little to say in conversation, for he had kept the best company, and learnt all that can be got by the ear. He abused Pindar to me, and then showed me an ode of his own, with an absurd couplet, making a linnet soar on an eagle's wing. I told him that when the ancients made a simile, they always made it like something real."

Mr. Wilkes remarked, that "among all the bold flights of Shakespeare's imagination, the boldest was making Birnam-wood march to Dunsinane; creating a wood where there never was a shrub; a wood in Scotland! ha! ha! ha!" And he also observed, that "the clannish slavery of the Highlands of Scotland was the single exception to Milton's remark of 'the mountain nymph, sweet Liberty,' being worshipped in all hilly countries." "When I was at Inverary," said he, "on a visit to my old friend Archibald, Duke of Argyle, his dependents congratulated me on being such a favourite of his Grace. I said, 'It is, then, gentlemen, truly lucky for me ;

¹ Owen M'Swinney, who died in 1754, and bequeathed his fortune to Mrs. Woffington, the actress. He had been a manager of Drury Lane theatre, and afterwards of the Queen's theatre in the Haymarket. He was also a dramatic writer, having produced a comedy entitled "The Quacks, or Love's the Physician," 1705, and two operas.—M.

for if I had displeased the duke, and he had wished it, there is not a Campbell among you but would have been ready to bring John Wilkes's head to him in a charger. It would have been only

‘Off with his head! so much for *Aylesbury*.

I was then member for Aylesbury.”

Dr. Johnson and Mr. Wilkes talked of the contested passage in Horace's “Art of Poetry,” *Difficile est propriè communia dicere*. Mr. Wilkes, according to my note, gave the interpretation thus. “It is difficult to speak with propriety of common things; as, if a poet had to speak of Queen Caroline drinking tea, he must endeavour to avoid the vulgarity of cups and saucers.” But, upon reading my note, he tells me that he meant to say, that “the word *communia*, being a Roman law term, signifies here things *communis juris*, that is to say, what have never yet been treated by anybody; and this appears clearly from what followed,—

‘————— Tuque

Rectius Iliacum carmen deducis in actus,

Quàm si proferres ignota indictaque primus.,

You will easier make a tragedy out of the Iliad than on any subject not handled before.” JOHNSON. “He means that it is difficult to appropriate to particular persons qualities which are common to all mankind, as Homer has done.”

WILKES. “We have no city-poet now: that is an office which has gone into disuse. The last was Elkanah Settle.¹ There is something in *names* which one cannot help feeling. Now *Elkanah Settle* sounds so *queer*, who can expect much from that name? We should have no hesitation to give it for John Dryden, in preference to Elkanah Settle, from the names only, without knowing their different merits.”

JOHNSON. “I suppose, Sir, Settle did as well for aldermen in his time, as John Home could do now. Where did Beckford and Trecothick learn English?”

Mr. Arthur Lee mentioned some Scotch who had taken posses-

¹ Settle, for his factious audacity, was made the city poet, whose annual office was to describe the glories of the Mayor's day. Of these bards he was the last. He died, in 1723, a pensioner in the Charterhouse.—JOHNSON, *Life of Dryden*.

sion of a barren part of America, and wondered why they should choose it. JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, all barrenness is comparative. The *Scotch* would not know it to be barren." BOSWELL. "Come, come, he is flattering the English. You have now been in Scotland, Sir, and say if you did not see meat and drink enough there." JOHNSON. "Why, yes, Sir; meat and drink enough to give the inhabitants sufficient strength to run away from home." All these quick and lively sallies were said sportively, quite in jest, and with a smile, which showed that he meant only wit. Upon this topic he and Mr. Wilkes could perfectly assimilate; here was a bond of union between them, and I was conscious that as both of them had visited Caledonia, both were fully satisfied of the strange narrow ignorance of those who imagine that it is a land of famine. But they amused themselves with persevering in the old jokes. When I claimed a superiority for Scotland over England in one respect, that no man can be arrested there for a debt merely because another swears it against him; but there must first be the judgment of a court of law ascertaining its justice; and that a seizure of the person, before judgment is obtained, can take place only if his creditor should swear that he is about to fly from the country, or, as it is technically expressed, is *in meditatione fugæ*. WILKES. "That, I should think, may be safely sworn of all the Scotch nation." JOHNSON (to Mr. Wilkes). "You must know, Sir, I lately took my friend Boswell, and showed him genuine civilized life in an English provincial town. I turned him loose at Lichfield, my native city, that he might see for once real civility; for you know he lives among savages in Scotland, and among rakes in London." WILKES. "Except when he is with grave, sober, decent people, like you and me." JOHNSON (smiling). "And we ashamed of him."

They were quite frank and easy. Johnson told the story of his asking Mrs. Macaulay to allow her footman to sit down with them, to prove the ridiculousness of the argument for the equality of mankind: and he said to me afterwards, with a nod of satisfaction, "You saw Mr. Wilkes acquiesced." Wilkes talked with all imaginable freedom of the ludicrous title given to the attorney-general, *Diabolus regis*; adding, "I have reason to know something about that officer; for I was prosecuted for a libel." Johnson, who many

people would have supposed must have been furiously angry at hearing this talked of so lightly, said not a word. He was now, *indeed*, "a good humoured fellow."

After dinner we had an accession of Mrs. Knowles, the Quaker lady, well known for her various talents, and of Mr. Alderman Lee.¹ Amidst some patriotic groans, somebody (I think the Alderman) said, "Poor old England is lost." JOHNSON. "Sir, it is not so much to be lamented that old England is lost, as that the Scotch have found it."² WILKES. "Had Lord Bute governed Scotland only, I should not have taken the trouble to write his eulogy, and dedicate 'MORTIMER' to him."

Mr. Wilkes held a candle to show a fine print of a beautiful female figure which hung in the room, and pointed out the elegant contour of the bosom with the finger of an arch connoisseur. He afterwards in a conversation with me waggishly insisted, that all the time Johnson showed visible signs of a fervent admiration of the corresponding charms of the fair Quaker.

This record, though by no means so perfect as I could wish, will serve to give a notion of a very curious interview, which was not only pleasing at the time, but had the agreeable and benignant effect of reconciling any animosity, and sweetening any acidity, which, in the various bustle of political contest, had been produced in the minds of two men, who, though widely different, had so many things in common—classical learning, modern literature, wit and humour, and ready repartee—that it would have been much to be regretted if they had been for ever at a distance from each other.

Mr. Burke gave me much credit for this successful *negotiation*; and pleasantly said, "that there was nothing equal to it in the whole history of the *corps diplomatique*."

I attended Dr. Johnson home, and had the satisfaction to hear

¹ It is to this gentleman that allusion is supposed to be made in the following anecdote. "Some one mentioned a gentleman of that party for having behaved oddly on an occasion where faction was not concerned: 'Is he not a citizen of London, a native of North America, and a Whig?' said Johnson. 'Let him be absurd, I beg of you: when a monkey is *too* like a man, it shocks one.'"—PROZEL, p. 64.—O.

² It would not become me to expatiate on this strong and pointed remark, in which a very great deal of meaning is condensed.

him tell Mrs. Williams how much he had been pleased with Mr. Wilkes's company, and what an agreeable day he had passed.¹

I talked a good deal to him of the celebrated Margaret Caroline Rudd, whom I had visited, induced by the fame of her talents, address, and irresistible power of fascination.² To a lady who disapproved of my visiting her, he said on a former occasion, "Nay, Madam, Boswell is in the right; I should have visited her myself, were it not that they have now a trick of putting everything into the newspapers." This evening he exclaimed, "I envy him his acquaintance with Mrs. Rudd."

I mentioned a scheme which I had of making a tour to the Isle of Man, and giving a full account of it; and that Mr. Burke had playfully suggested as a motto,

"The proper study of mankind is MAN."

JOHNSON. "Sir, you will get more by the book than the jaunt will cost you; so you will have your diversion for nothing, and add to your reputation."³

On the evening of the next day, I took leave of him, being to set out for Scotland. I thanked him, with great warmth, for all his kindness. "Sir," said he, "you are very welcome. Nobody repays it with more."⁴

¹ The following is Dr. Johnson's own good-humoured account to Mrs. Thrale of this meeting: "For my part I begin to settle, and keep company with *grave aldermen*. I dined yesterday in the Poultry with Mr. Alderman Wilkes, and Mr. Alderman Lee, and Councillor Lee, his brother. There sat you the while thinking, 'What is Johnson doing?' What should he be doing? He is breaking jokes with Jack Wilkes upon the Scotch. Such, Madam, are the vicissitudes of things! And there was Mrs. Knowles, the Quaker, that works the subtle pictures, who is a great admirer of your conversation."—C.

² Her power of fascination was celebrated, because it was the fashion to suppose that she had fascinated her lover to the gallows.—C.

³ "May 14, 1776. Boswell goes away on Thursday very well satisfied with his journey. Some great men have promised to obtain him a place; and then a fig for his father and his new wife."—*Letters*, vol. i. p. 324. This place he never obtained, and the critical reader will observe several passages in this work, the tone of which may be attributed to his disappointment in this point. Lord Auchinleck had lately married Elizabeth Boswell, sister of Claude Irvine Boswell, afterwards a Lord of Session, by the title of Lord Balmuto. She was the cousin german of her husband. Of this marriage there was no issue.—C.

⁴ "May 18, 1776. Boswell went away on Thursday night with no great inclination to travel northward; but who can contend with destiny? He says he had a very pleasant journey. He carries with him two or three good resolutions; I hope they did not mould on the road."—*Letters*, vol. i. p. 330.—C.

CHAPTER XIII.

1776—1777.

Mr. Joshua Reynolds's Dinners—Goldsmith's Epitaph—The Round Robin—Employment of Time—Blair's Sermons—Easter Day—Prayer—Sir Alexander Dick—Shaw's Erse Grammar—Johnson engages to write "The Lives of the English Poets,"—Edward Dilly—Correspondence—Charles O'Connor—Dr. Zachary Pearce's Posthumous Works—Prologue to Hugh Kelly's "Word to the Wise."

How very false is the notion that has gone round the world of the rough, and passionate, and harsh manners of this great and good man ! That he had occasional sallies of heat of temper, and that he was sometimes, perhaps, too "easily provoked" by absurdity and folly, and sometimes too desirous of triumph in colloquial contest, must be allowed. The quickness both of his perception and sensibility disposed him to sudden explosions of satire ; to which his extraordinary readiness of wit was a strong and almost irresistible incitement. To adopt one of the finest images in Mr. Home's "Douglas,"

———"On each glance of thought
Decision followed, as the thunderbolt
Pursues the flash !"——

I admit that the beadle within him was often so eager to apply the lash, that the judge had not time to consider the case with sufficient deliberation.

That he was occasionally remarkable for violence of temper may be granted ; but let us ascertain the degree, and not let it be supposed that he was in a perpetual rage, and never without a club in his hand to knock down every one who approached him. On the contrary, the truth is, that by much the greatest part of his time he was civil, obliging, nay, polite in the true sense of the word ; so much so, that many gentlemen who were long acquainted with him never received, or even heard a strong expression from him.

LETTER 248.

TO MRS. THRALE.

"May 22, 1776.

"On Friday and Saturday I dined with Dr. Taylor, who is in discontent, but resolved not to stay much longer to hear the opinions of lawyers, who are all against him. On Sunday I dined at Sir Joshua's house on the hill [Richmond], with the Bishop of St. Asaph [Shipley:] the dinner was good, and the bishop is knowing and conversable."¹

LETTER 249.

TO HENRY THRALE, ESQ.

"June 3, 1776.

"My *Mistress* writes as if she was afraid that I should make too much haste to see her. Pray tell her that there is no danger. The lameness of which I made mention in one of my notes has improved into a very serious and troublesome fit of the gout. I creep about and hang by both hands. I enjoy all the dignity of lameness. I receive ladies and dismiss them sitting. 'Painful pre-eminence!'"

The following letters concerning an Epitaph which he wrote for the monument of Dr. Goldsmith, in Westminster Abbey, afford at once a proof of his unaffected modesty, his carelessness as to his own writings, and of the great respect which he entertained for the

¹ This praise of Sir Joshua's dinner was not a matter of course; for his table, though very agreeable, was not what is usually called a *good* one, as appears from the following description given of it by Mr. Courtenay (a frequent and favourite guest) to Sir James Mackintosh:—

"There was something singular in the style and economy of Sir Joshua's table that contributed to pleasantry and good humour; a coarse inelegant plenty, without any regard to order and arrangement. A table, prepared for seven or eight, was often compelled to contain fifteen or sixteen. When this pressing difficulty was got over, a deficiency of knives, forks, plates, and glasses succeeded. The attendance was in the same style; and it was absolutely necessary to call instantly for beer, bread, or wine, that you might be supplied with them before the first course was over. He was once prevailed on to furnish the table with decanters and glasses at dinner, to save time, and prevent the tardy manœuvres of two or three occasional undisciplined domestics. As these accelerating utensils were demolished in the course of service, Sir Joshua could never be persuaded to replace them. But these trifling embarrassments only served to enhance the hilarity and singular pleasure of the entertainment. The wine, cookery, and dishes were but little attended to; nor was the fish or venison ever talked of or recommended. Amidst this convivial, animated bustle among his guests, our host sat perfectly composed; always attending to what was said, never minding what was eat or drank, but left every one at perfect liberty to scramble for himself. Temporal and spiritual peers, physicians, lawyers, actors, and musicians, composed the motley group, and played their parts without dissonance or discord. At five o'clock precisely dinner was served, whether all the invited guests were arrived or not. Sir Joshua was never so fashionably ill-bred as to wait an hour perhaps for two or three persons of rank or title, and put the rest of the company out of humour by this invidious distinction. His friends and intimate acquaintance will ever love his memory, and will long regret those social hours, and the cheerfulness of that irregular, convivial table, which no one has attempted to revive or imitate, or was indeed qualified to supply."—C.

taste and judgment of the excellent and eminent person to whom the first and last are addressed :—

LETTER 250. TO SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

" May 18, 1776.

"DEAR SIR,—I have been kept away from you, I know not well how, and of these vexatious hindrances I know not when there will be an end. I therefore send you the poor dear Doctor's epitaph. Read it first yourself; and if you then think it right, show it to the Club. I am, you know, willing to be corrected. If you think anything much amiss, keep it to yourself till we come together. I have sent two copies, but prefer the card. The dates must be settled by Dr. Percy. I am, Sir, &c.

"SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 251. FROM MISS REYNOLDS.

" Richmond Hill, June 21, 1776.

"SIR,—You saw by my last letter that I knew nothing of your illness, and it was unkind of you not to tell me what had been the matter with you; and you should have let me know how Mrs. Thrale and all the family were; but that would have been a sad transgression of the rule you have certainly prescribed to yourself of writing to some sort of people just such a number of lines. Be so good as to favour me with Dr. Goldsmith's Epitaph; and if you have no objection, I should be very glad to send it to Dr. Beattie. I am writing now to Mrs. Beattie, and can scarce hope she will ever excuse my shameful neglect of writing to her, but by sending her something curious for Dr. Beattie.

"I don't know whether my brother ever mentioned to you what Dr. Beattie said in a letter he received from him the beginning of last month. As I have his letter here, I will transcribe it. 'In my third Essay, which treats of the advantages of classical learning, I have said something of Dr. Johnson, which I hope will please him; I ought not to call it a compliment, for it expresses nothing but the real sentiments of my heart. I can never forget the many and great obligations I am under to his genius and to his virtue, and I wish for an opportunity of testifying my gratitude to the world.'

"My brother says he has lost Dr. Goldsmith's Epitaph, otherwise I would not trouble you for it. Indeed I should or I ought have asked if you had any objection to my sending it, before I did send it.—I am, my good Sir, &c.

"FRANCES REYNOLDS."

LETTER 252. TO MISS REYNOLDS.

" June 21, 1776.

"DEAREST MADAM,—You are as naughty as you can be. I am willing enough to write to you when I have anything to say. As for my disorder, as Sir Joshua saw me, I fancied he would tell you, and that I needed not tell you myself. Of Dr. Goldsmith's Epitaph, I sent Sir Joshua two copies, and had

none myself. If he has lost it, he has not done well. But I suppose I can recollect it, and will send it to you.—I am, Madam, &c.

“SAM. JOHNSON.”

“P.S.—All the Thrales are well, and Mrs Thrale has a great regard for Miss Reynolds.”

LETTER 253.

TO SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

“June 22, 1776.

“SIR,—Miss Reynolds has a mind to send the Epitaph to Dr. Beattie; I am very willing, but having no copy, cannot immediately recollect it. She tells me you have lost it. Try to recollect, and put down as much as you retain; you perhaps may have kept what I have dropped. The lines for which I am at a loss are something of *rerum civilium sive naturalium*. It was a sorry trick to lose it; help me if you can.—I am, Sir, your most humble servant,

“SAM. JOHNSON.”

“The gout grows better, but slowly.”

It was, I think, after I had left London in this year, that this Epitaph gave occasion to a remonstrance to the *Monarch of Literature*, for an account of which I am indebted to Sir William Forbes, of Pitsligo.

That my readers may have the subject more fully and clearly before them, I shall insert the Epitaph :

“OLIVARII GOLDSMITH,
Poetæ, Physici, Historici,
Qui nullum ferè scribendi genus
Non tetigit,
Nullum quod tetigit non ornavit:
Sive risus essent movendi,
Sive lacrymæ,
Affectuum potens at lenis dominator:
Ingenio sublimis, vividus, versatilis,
Oratione grandis, nitidus, venustus:
Hoc monumento memoriam coluit
Sodalium amor,
Amicorum fides,
Lectorum veneratio.
Natus in Hiberniâ Forniæ Longfordiensis,
In loco cui nomen Pallas,
Nov. XXIX. MDCCXXXI.¹;
Eblanæ literis institutus;
Obiit Londini,
April. IV. MDCCCLXIV.”

¹ This was a mistake, which was not discovered till after Goldsmith's death, and was put up in Westminster Abbey. He was born Nov. 29, 1728; and therefore, when he died, he was in his forty-sixth year.—M.

Sir William Forbes writes to me thus: I "enclose the *Round Robin*. This *jeu d'esprit* took its rise one day at dinner at our friend Sir Joshua Reynolds's. All the company present, except myself, were friends and acquaintance of Dr. Goldsmith. The Epitaph written for him by Dr. Johnson became the subject of conversation, and various emendations were suggested, which it was agreed should be submitted to the Doctor's consideration. But the question was, who should have the courage to propose them to him? At last it was hinted, that there could be no way so good as that of a *Round Robin*, as the sailors call it, which they make use of when they enter into a conspiracy, so as not to let it be known who puts his name first or last to the paper. This proposition was instantly assented to; and Dr. Barnard, Dean of Derry, now Bishop of Killaloe,¹ drew up an address to Dr. Johnson on the occasion, replete with wit and humour, but which it was feared the Doctor might think treated the subject with too much levity. Mr. Burke then proposed the address as it stands in the paper in writing, to which I had the honour to officiate as clerk.

"Sir Joshua agreed to carry it to Dr. Johnson, who received it with much good humour,² and desired Sir Joshua to tell the gentle-

¹ This prelate, who was afterwards translated to the see of Limerick, died at Wimbledon, in Surrey, June 7, 1806, in his eightieth year. The original *Round Robin* remained in his possession; the paper which Sir William Forbes transmitted to Mr. Boswell being only a copy.—MALONE.

² He, however, upon seeing Dr. Warton's name to the suggestion, that the epitaph should be in English, observed to Sir Joshua, "I wonder that Joe Warton, a scholar by profession, should be such a fool." He said too, "I should have thought Mund Burke would have had more sense." Mr. Langton, who was one of the company at Sir Joshua's, like a sturdy scholar, resolutely refused to sign the *Round Robin*. The epitaph is engraved upon Dr. Goldsmith's monument without any alteration. At another time, when somebody endeavoured to argue in favour of its being in English, Johnson said, "The language of the country of which a learned man was a native is not the language fit for his epitaph, which should be in ancient and permanent language. Consider, Sir, how you should feel, were you to find at Rotterdam an epitaph upon Erasmus *in Dutch*!" For my part, I think it would be best to have epitaphs written both in a learned language and in the language of the country; so that they might have the advantage of being more universally understood, and at the same time be secured of classical stability. I cannot, however, but be of opinion, that it is not sufficiently discriminative. Applying to Goldsmith equally the epithets of "*Poetæ, Historici, Physici*," is surely not right; for as to his claim to the last of those epithets, I have heard Johnson himself say, "Goldsmith, Sir, will give us a very fine book upon the subject; but if he can distinguish a cow from a horse, that, I believe, may be the extent of his knowledge of natural history." His book is, indeed, an excellent performance, though in some instances he appears to have trusted too much to Buffon who, with all his theoretical ingenuity and extraordinary elo-

man, that he would alter the Epitaph in any manner they pleased, as to the sense of it, but *he would never consent to disgrace the walls of Westminster Abbey, with an English inscription.*

"I consider this *Round Robin* as a species of literary curiosity worth preserving, as it marks, in a certain degree, Dr. Johnson's character."

My readers are presented with a faithful transcript of a paper, which I doubt not of their being desirous to see.

[× E. Gibbon. × Jos. Warton. × Edm. Burke. ×

T. Barnard. × R. B. Sheridan. × P. Metcalfe.

"We the Circumscribers, having read with great pleasure an intended epitaph for the monument of Dr. Goldsmith; which, considered abstractedly, appears to be, for elegant composition, and masterly style, in every respect worthy of the pen of its learned author; are yet of opinion, that the character of the deceased as a writer, particularly as a poet, is, perhaps, not delineated with all the exactness which Dr. Johnson is capable of giving it. We, therefore, with deference to his superior judgment, humbly request that he would, at least, take the trouble of revising it; and of making such additions and alterations as he shall think proper on a further perusal. But if we might venture to express our wishes, they would lead us to request that he would write the epitaph in English, rather than in Latin; as we think the memory of so eminent an English writer ought to be perpetuated in the language to which his works are likely to be so lasting an ornament, which we also know to have been the opinion of the late Doctor himself."

Thos. Franklin,¹ × Ant. Chamier,² × Geo. Colman.

× W. Forbes. × J. Reynolds. × William Vachell.³ ×]

Sir William Forbes's observation is very just. The anecdote now related proves, in the strongest manner, the reverence and awe with

quence, I suspect had little actual information in the science on which he wrote so admirably. For instance, he tells us that the *cow* sheds her horns every two years; a most palpable error, which Goldsmith has faithfully transferred into his book. Is it wonderful that Buffon, who lived so much in the country, at his noble seat, should have fallen into such a blunder. I suppose he has confounded the *cow* with the *deer*.

¹ There would be no doubt that this was Thomas Franklin, D.D. the translator of Sophocles and Lucian, but that the Biog. Dict., and indeed the Doctor's own title-pages, spell his name *Francklin*. He died in 1784.—C.

² Anthony Chamier, Esq. M.P. for Tamworth, and Under-Secretary of State from 1775 till his death, 12th Oct. 1780.—C.

³ This gentleman was a friend of Sir Joshua's and attended his funeral.—C.

which Johnson was regarded, by some of the most eminent men of his time, in various departments, and even by such of them as lived most with him ; while it also confirms what I have again and again inculcated, that he was by no means of that ferocious and irascible character which has been ignorantly imagined.

This hasty composition is also to be remarked as one of the thousand instances which evince the extraordinary promptitude of Mr. Burke ; who, while he is equal to the greatest things, can adorn the least ; can, with equal facility, embrace the vast and complicated speculations of politics, or the ingenious topics of literary investigation.¹

LETTER 254.

TO MRS. BOSWELL.

" May 16, 1776.

" MADAM,—You must not think me uncivil in omitting to answer the letter with which you favoured me some time ago. I imagined it to have been written without Mr. Boswell's knowledge, and therefore supposed the answer to require, what I could not find, a private conveyance.

" The difference with Lord Auchinleck is now over ; and since young Alexander has appeared, I hope no more difficulties will arise among you ; for I sincerely wish you all happy. Do not teach the young ones to dislike me, as you dislike me yourself ; but let me at least have Veronica's kindness, because she is my acquaintance.

" You will now have Mr. Boswell home ; it is well that you have him ; he has led a wild life. I have taken him to Lichfield, and he has followed Mr. Thrale to Bath. Pray take care of him, and tame him. The only thing in which I have the honour to agree with you is, in loving him : and while we are so much of a mind in a matter of so much importance, our other quarrels will, I hope, produce no great bitterness. I am, Madam, &c.

" SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 255.

FROM MR. BOSWELL.

" Edinburgh, June 25, 1776.

" You have formerly complained that my letters were too long. There is no danger of that complaint being made at present ; for I find it difficult for me to write to you at all." [Here an account of having been afflicted with a return of melancholy or bad spirits.] " The boxes of books² which you sent to me are arrived ; but I have not yet examined the contents. I send you Mr. Macclaurin's paper for the negro who claims his freedom in the Court of Sessions."

¹ Besides this Latin epitaph, Johnson honoured the memory of his friend Goldsmith with a short one in Greek.

² Upon a settlement of our account of expenses on a tour to the Hebrides, there was a balance due to me, which Dr. Johnson chose to discharge by sending books.

LETTER 256.

TO MR. BOSWELL.

"July 2, 1770.

"DEAR SIR,—These black fits of which you complain, perhaps hurt your memory as well as your imagination. When did I complain that your letters were too long?¹ Your last letter, after a very long delay, brought very bad news." [Here a series of reflections upon melancholy, and—what I could not help thinking strangely unreasonable in him who had suffered so much from it himself—a good deal of severity and reproof, as if it were owing to my own fault, or that I was, perhaps, affecting it from a desire of distinction.] "Read Cheyne's 'English Malady;' but do not let him teach you a foolish notion that melancholy is a proof of acuteness.

"To hear that you have not opened your boxes of books is very offensive. The examination and arrangement of so many volumes might have afforded you an amusement very seasonable at present, and useful for the whole of life. I am, I confess, very angry that you manage yourself so ill. I do not now say any more, than that I am, with great kindness and sincerity, &c.

"SAM. JOHNSON.

"It was last year determined by Lord Mansfield in the Court of King's Bench, that a negro cannot be taken out of the kingdom without his own consent."

LETTER 257.

TO MR. BOSWELL.

"July 16, 1776.

"DEAR SIR,—I make haste to write again, lest my last letter should give you too much pain. If you are really oppressed with overpowering and involuntary melancholy, you are to be pitied rather than reproached.

"Now, my dear Boszy, let us have done with quarrels and with censure. Let me know whether I have not sent you a pretty library. There are, perhaps, many books among them which you never need read through, but there are none which it is not proper for you to know, and sometimes to consult. Of these books, of which the use is only occasional, it is often sufficient to know the contents, that when any question arises, you may know where to look for information.

"Since I wrote, I have looked over Mr. Maclaurin's plea, and think it excellent. How is the suit carried on? If by subscription, I commission you to contribute, in my name, what is proper. Let nothing be wanting in such a case. Dr. Drummond,² I see, is superseded. His father would have grieved;

¹ Baretti told me that Johnson complained of my writing very long letters to him when I was upon the continent: which was most certainly true: but it seems my friend did not remember it.

² The son of Johnson's old friend, Mr. William Drummond. He was a young man of such distinguished merit, that he was nominated to one of the medical professorships in the college of Edinburgh, without solicitation, while he was at Naples. Having other views, he did not accept of the honour, and soon afterwards died.

but he lived to obtain the pleasure of his son's election, and died before that pleasure was abated.

"Langton's lady has brought him a girl, and both are well: I dined with him the other day.

"It vexes me to tell you, that on the evening of the 29th of May I was seized by the gout, and am not quite well. The pain has not been violent, but the weakness and tenderness were very troublesome; and what is said to be very uncommon, it has not alleviated my other disorders. Make use of youth and health while you have them. Make my compliments to Mrs. Boswell. I am, my dear Sir, your most affectionate

"SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 258.

FROM MR. BOSWELL.

"Edinburgh, July 18, 1776.

"MY DEAR SIR,—Your letter of the 2d of this month was rather a harsh medicine; but I was delighted with that spontaneous tenderness, which, a few days afterwards, sent forth such balsam as your next brought me. I found myself for some time so ill that all I could do was to preserve a decent appearance, while all within was weakness and distress. Like a reduced garrison that has some spirit left, I hung out flags, and planted all the force I could muster upon the walls. I am now much better, and I sincerely thank you for your kind attention and friendly counsel.

"Count Manucci¹ came here last week from travelling in Ireland. I have shown him what civilities I could on his account, on yours, and on that of Mr. and Mrs. Thrale. He has had a fall from his horse, and been much hurt. I regret this unlucky accident, for he seems to be a very amiable man."

As the evidence of what I have mentioned at the beginning of this year, I select from his private register the following passage:—

"July 25, 1776.—O God, who hast ordained that whatever is to be desired should be sought by labour, and who, by thy blessing, bringest honest labour to good effect, look with mercy upon my studies and endeavours. Grant me, O Lord, to design only what is lawful and right; and afford me calmness of mind, and steadiness of purpose, that I may so do thy will in this short life, as to obtain happiness in the world to come, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen." (Pr. and Med. p. 151.)

It appears from a note subjoined, that this was composed when he

¹ A Florentine nobleman, mentioned by Johnson in his "Notes of his Tour in France." I had the pleasure of becoming acquainted with him in London, in the spring of this year.

"purposed to apply vigorously to study, particularly of the Greek and Italian tongues."

Such a purpose, so expressed, at the age of sixty-seven, is admirable and encouraging; and it must impress all the thinking part of my readers with a consolatory confidence in habitual devotion, when they see a man of such enlarged intellectual powers as Johnson, thus in the genuine earnestness of secrecy, imploring the aid of that Supreme Being, "from whom cometh down every good and every perfect gift."

LETTER. 259.

TO SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

"Aug. 8, 1776.

"SIR,—A young man, whose name is Paterson, offers himself this evening to the Academy. He is the son of a man¹ for whom I have long had a kindness, and is now abroad in distress. I shall be glad that you will be pleased to show him any little countenance, or pay him any small distinction. How much it is in your power to favour or to forward a young man I do not know; nor do I know how much this candidate deserves favour by his personal merit, or what hopes his proficiency may now give of future eminence. I recommend him as the son of my friend. Your character and station enable you to give a young man great encouragement by very easy means. You have heard of a man who asked no other favour of Sir Robert Walpole, than that he would bow to him at his levee.—I am, Sir, your most humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 260.

FROM MR. BOSWELL.

"Edinburgh Aug. 30, 1776.

(After giving him an account of my having examined the chests of books which he had sent to me, and which contained what may be truly called a numerous and miscellaneous *stall library*, thrown together at random:—) "Lord Hailes was against the decree in the case of my client, the minister; not that he justified the minister, but because the parishioner both provoked and retorted. I sent his lordship your able argument upon the case for his perusal. His observation upon it in a letter to me was, 'Dr. Johnson's *Suasorium* is pleasantly² and artfully composed. I suspect however, that he has not convinced himself; for I believe that he is better read in ecclesiastical history,

¹ Samuel Paterson, formerly a bookseller, latterly an auctioneer, and well known for his skill in forming catalogues of books. He died in London, Oct. 22, 1802.

² Why his Lordship uses the epithet *pleasantly*, when speaking of a grave piece of reasoning, I cannot conceive. But different men have different notions of pleasantry. I happened to sit by a gentleman one evening at the Opera-house in London, who, at the moment when *Medea* appeared to be in great agony at the thought of killing her children, turned to me with a smile, and said "*funny enough*."

than to imagine that a bishop or a presbyter has a right to begin censure or discipline *à cathedra*.¹

"For the honour of Count Manucci, as well as to observe that exactness of truth which you have taught me, I must correct what I said in a former letter. He did not fall from his horse, which might have been an imputation on his skill as an officer of cavalry; his horse fell with him.

"I have, since I saw you, read every word of 'Grainger's Biographical History.' It has entertained me exceedingly, and I do not think him the *Whig* that you supposed. Horace Walpole's being his patron is, indeed, no good sign of his political principles. But he denied to Lord Mountstuart that he was a Whig, and said he had been accused by both parties of partiality. It seems he was like Pope,—

'While Tories call me Whig, and Whigs a Tory.'

I wish you would look more into his book; and as Lord Mountstuart wishes much to find a proper person to continue the work upon Grainger's plan, and has desired I would mention it to you, if such a man occurs, please to let me know. His lordship will give him generous encouragement."²

LETTER 261.

TO MR. ROBERT LEVET.

Brightelmstone, Oct 21, 1776.

"DEAR SIR,—Having spent about six weeks at this place, we have at length resolved on returning. I expect to see you all in Fleet Street on the 30th of his month.

"I did not go into the sea till last Friday;³ but think to go most of this week, though I know not that it does me any good. My nights are very restless and tiresome, but I am otherwise well. I have written word of my coming to Mrs. Williams.

"Remember me kindly to Francis and Betsey.⁴—I am, Sir, &c.

SAM. JOHNSON"⁵

¹ Dr. Johnson afterwards told me, that he was of opinion that a clergyman had this right.

² Lord Mountstuart, afterwards first Marquis of Bute, had also patronised, in a similar manner, Sir John Hill's immense "Vegetable System" (twenty-six vols. folio!); but Sir John's widow published, in 1788, "An Address to the Public," in which she alleged that Lord Bute had acted very penuriously in that matter.—C.

³ Johnson was a good swimmer. "One of the bathing-men at Brighton seeing him swim, said, 'Why, Sir, you must have been a stout-hearted gentleman forty years ago.'"—Prozzi.—C.

⁴ His female servant.—M.

⁵ For this and Dr. Johnson's other letters to Mr. Levet, I am indebted to my old acquaintance Mr. Nathaniel Thomas, whose worth and ingenuity have been long known to a respectable though not a wide circle, and whose collection of medals would do credit to persons of greater opulence.—B. Mr. Thomas was many years editor of the "St. James's Chronicle." He died March 1, 1798.—M.

I again wrote to Dr. Johnson on the 21st of October, informing him, that my father had, in the most liberal manner, paid a large debt for me, and that I had now the happiness of being upon very good terms with him; to which he returned the following answer :

LETTER 262.

TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

" Bolt Court, Nov. 16, 1776.

" DEAR SIR,—I had great pleasure in hearing that you are at last on good terms with your father. Cultivate his kindness by all honest and manly means. Life is but short: no time can be afforded but for the indulgence of real sorrow, or contests upon questions seriously momentous. Let us not throw away any of our days upon useless resentment, or contend who shall hold out longest in stubborn malignity. It is best not to be angry; and best, in the next place, to be quickly reconciled. May you and your father pass the remainder of your time in reciprocal benevolence! Do you ever hear from Mr. Langton? I visit him sometimes, but he does not talk. I do not like his scheme of life; but as I am not permitted to understand it, I cannot set anything right that is wrong. His children are sweet babies.

" I hope my irreconcilable enemy, Mrs. Boswell, is well. Desire her not to transmit her malevolence to the young people. Let me have Alexander, and Veronica, and Euphemia, for my friends.

" Mrs. Williams, whom you may reckon as one of your well-wishers, is in a feeble and languishing state, with little hopes of growing better. She went for some part of the autumn into the country, but is little benefited; and Dr. Lawrence confesses that his art is at an end. Death is, however, at a distance: and what more than that can we say of ourselves? I am sorry for her pain, and more sorry for her decay. Mr. Levet is sound, wind and limb.

" I was some weeks this autumn at Brighthelmstone. The place was very dull; and I was not well: the expedition to the Hebrides was the most pleasant journey that I ever made. Such an effort annually would give the world a little diversification. Every year, however, we cannot wander, and must therefore endeavour to spend our time at home as well as we can. I believe it is best to throw life into a method, that every hour may bring its employment, and every employment have its hour. Xenophon observes, in his 'Treatise of Economy,' that if everything be kept in a certain place, when anything is worn out or consumed, the vacuity which it leaves will show what is wanting; so if every part of time has its duty, the hour will call into remembrance its proper engagement.

" I have not practised all this prudence myself, but I have suffered much for want of it; and I would have you, by timely recollection and steady resolution, escape from those evils which have lain heavy upon me. I am, my dear
est Boswell, &c.

SAM. JOHNSON."

On the 16th of November, I informed him that Mr. Strahan had sent me *twelve* copies of the "Journey to the Western Islands," handsomely bound, instead of the *twenty* copies which were stipulated, but which, I supposed, were to be only in sheets; requested to know how they should be distributed; and mentioned that I had another son born to me, who was named David, and was a sickly infant.

LETTER 263.

TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"Dec. 21, 1776.

"DEAR SIR,—I have been for some time ill of a cold, which, perhaps, I made an excuse to myself for not writing, when in reality I know not what to say.

"The books you must at last distribute as you think best, in my name, or your own, as you are inclined, or as you judge most proper. Everybody cannot be obliged; but I wish that nobody may be offended. Do the best you can.

"I congratulate you on the increase of your family, and hope that little David is by this time well, and his mamma perfectly recovered. I am much pleased to hear of the re-establishment of kindness between you and your father. Cultivate his paternal tenderness as much as you can. To live at variance at all is uncomfortable; and variance with a father is still more uncomfortable. Besides that, in the whole dispute you have the wrong side; at least you gave the first provocations, and some of them very offensive. Let it now be all over. As you have no reason to think that your new mother has shown you any foul play, treat her with respect, and with some degree of confidence; this will secure your father. When once a discordant family has felt the pleasure of peace, they will not willingly lose it. If Mrs. Boswell would be but friends with me, we might now shut the temple of Janus.

"What came of Dr. Memis's cause? Is the question about the negro determined? Has Sir Allan any reasonable hopes? What is become of poor Macquarry? Let me know the event of all these litigations. I wish particularly well to the negro and Sir Allan.

"Mrs. Williams has been much out of order; and though she is something better, is likely, in her physician's opinion, to endure her malady for life, though she may, perhaps, die of some other. Mrs. Thrale is big, and fancies that she carries a boy: if it were very reasonable to wish much about it, I should wish her not to be disappointed. The desire of male heirs is not appendant only to feudal tenures. A son is almost necessary to the continuance of Thrale's fortune; for what can misses do with a brew-house? Lands are fitter for daughters than trades.

"Baretti went away from Thrale's in some whimsical fit of disgust, or ill-nature, without taking any leave. It is well if he finds in any other place as good an habitation, and as many conveniences. He has got five and twenty

guineas by translating Sir Joshua's Discourses into Italian, and Mr Thrale gave him an hundred in the spring; so that he is yet in no difficulties.

"Colman has bought Foote's patent, and is to allow Foote for life sixteen hundred pounds a year, as Reynolds told me, and to allow him to play so often on such terms that he may gain four hundred pounds more. What Colman can get by this bargain,¹ but trouble and hazard, I do not see. I am, dear Sir, &c.

"SAM. JOHNSON."

The Reverend Dr. Hugh Blair, who had long been admired as a preacher at Edinburgh, thought now of diffusing his excellent sermons more extensively, and increasing his reputation, by publishing a collection of them. He transmitted the manuscript to Mr. Strahan, the printer, who, after keeping it for some time, wrote a letter to him, discouraging the publication. Such, at first, was the unpropitious state of one of the most successful theological books that has ever appeared. Mr. Strahan, however, had sent one of the sermons to Dr. Johnson for his opinion; and after his unfavourable letter to Dr. Blair had been sent off, he received from Johnson on Christmas-eve, a note in which was the following paragraph:—

"I have read over Dr. Blair's first sermon with more than approbation; to say it is good, is to say too little."

I believe Mr. Strahan had very soon after this time a conversation with Dr. Johnson concerning them; and then he very candidly wrote again to Dr. Blair, enclosing Johnson's note, and agreeing to purchase the volume, for which he and Mr. Cadell gave one hundred pounds. The sale was so rapid and extensive, and the approbation of the public so high, that, to their honour be it recorded, the proprietors made Dr. Blair a present first of one sum, and afterwards another, of fifty pounds, thus voluntarily doubling the stipulated price; and, when he prepared another volume, they gave him at once three hundred pounds, being in all five hundred pounds, by an agreement to which I am a subscribing witness; and now for a third octavo volume he has received no less than six hundred pounds.²

¹ It turned out, however, a very fortunate bargain; for Foote, though not then fifty-six, died at an inn in Dover, in less than a year, October 21, 1777.—M.

² A fourth volume was purchased on the same liberal terms, and a fifth was published after his death, in 1801, with "A short Account of his Life, by the Rev. Dr. Finlayson." A larger life appeared in 1807, by Dr. Hill.—CHALMERS.

LETTER 264.

TO MRS. THERALE.

"Wednesday, January 15, 1 in the morning, 1777.

'*Omnia rerum vicissitudo!* The night after last Thursday was so bad that I took ipecacuanha the next day. The next night was no better. On Saturday I dined with Sir Joshua. The night was such as I was forced to rise and pass some hours in a chair, with great labour of respiration. I found it now time to do something, and went to Dr. Lawrence, and told him I would do what he should order, without reading the prescription. He sent for a chirurgeon, and took about twelve ounces of blood, and in the afternoon I got sleep in a chair.

"At night, when I came to lie down, after trial of an hour or two, I found sleep impracticable, and therefore did what the doctor permitted in a case of distress; I rose, and opening the orifice, let out about ten ounces more. Frank and I were but awkward; but, with Mr. Levet's help we stopped the stream, and I lay down again, though to little purpose; the difficulty of breathing allowed no rest. I slept again in the daytime, in an erect posture. The doctor has ordered me a second bleeding, which I hope will set my breath at liberty. Last night I could lie but a little at a time.

"Yet I do not make it a matter of much form. I was to-day at Mrs. Gardner's. When I have bled to-morrow, I will not give up Langton nor Paradise. But I beg that you will fetch me away on Friday. I do not know but clearer air may do me good; but whether the air be clear or dark, let me come to you.¹ I am, &c.

"To sleep or not to sleep——"

In 1777, it appears from his "Prayers and Meditations," that Johnson suffered much from a state of mind "unsettled and perplexed," and from that constitutional gloom, which together with his extreme humility and anxiety with regard to his religious state, made him contemplate himself through too dark and unfavourable a medium. It may be said of him, that he "saw God in clouds." Certain we may be of his injustice to himself in the following lamentable paragraph, which it is painful to think came from the contrite heart of this great man, to whose labours the world is so much indebted :—

"When I survey my past life, I discover nothing but a barren waste of time, with some disorders of body, and disturbances of the mind very near to madness, which I hope He that made me will suffer to extenuate many faults, and excuse many deficiencies." (P. 155.)

¹ This letter affords a strong proof of Johnson's anxiety for society, and the effort he would make, even over disease, to enjoy it.—C.

But we find his devotions in this year eminently fervent ; and we are comforted by observing intervals of quiet, composure, and gladness.

On Easter-day we find the following emphatic prayer :—

“Almighty and most merciful Father, who seest all our miseries, and knowest all our necessities, look down upon me and pity me. Defend me from the violent incursion of evil thoughts, and enable me to form and keep such resolutions as may conduce to the discharge of the duties which thy providence shall appoint me ; and so help me, by thy Holy Spirit, that my heart may surely there be fixed where true joys are to be found, and that I may serve thee with pure affection and a cheerful mind. Have mercy upon me, O God, have mercy upon me ! Years and infirmities oppress me ; terror, and anxiety beset me. Have mercy upon me, my Creator and my Judge ! In all dangers protect me ; in all perplexities relieve and free me ; and so help me by thy Holy Spirit, that I may now so commemorate the death of thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ, as that, when this short and painful life shall have an end, I may, for his sake, be received to everlasting happiness. Amen.” (P. 158.)

While he was at church, the agreeable impressions upon his mind are thus commemorated :—

“On Easter-day I was at church early, and there prayed over my prayer, and commended Tetty and my other friends. I was for some time much distressed, but at last obtained, I hope, from the God of Peace, more quiet than I have enjoyed for a long time. I had made no resolution, but as my heart grew lighter, my hopes revived, and my courage increased : and I wrote with my pencil in my Common Prayer-book,—

“*Vita ordinanda.
Biblia legenda.
Theologia opera danda.
Seriendum et letandum.*”

“I then went to the altar, having, I believe, again read my prayer. I then went to the table and communicated, praying for some time afterwards, but the particular matter of my prayer I do not remember.

“I dined, by an appointment, with Mrs. Gardiner, and passed the afternoon with such calm gladness of mind as it is very long since I felt before. I came home, and began to read the Bible. I passed the night in such sweet uninterrupted sleep as I have not known since I slept at Fort Augustus.

“On Monday I dined with Sheward, on Tuesday with Paradise. The mornings have been devoured by company, and one intrusion has, through the whole week, succeeded to another.

"At the beginning of the year I proposed to myself a scheme of life, and a plan of study; but neither life has been rectified, nor study followed. Days and months pass in a dream; and I am afraid that my memory grows less tenacious, and my observation less attentive. If I am decaying, it is time to make haste. My nights are restless and tedious, and my days drowsy. The flatulence which torments me has sometimes so obstructed my breath, that the act of respiration became not only voluntary, but laborious in a decumbent posture. By copious bleeding I was relieved, but not cured.

"I have this year omitted church on most Sundays, intending to supply the deficiency in the week. So that I owe twelve attendances on worship I will make no more such superstitious stipulations, which entangle the mind with unbidden obligations." (P. 156-159.)

Mr Steevens, whose generosity is well known, joined Dr. Johnson in kind assistance to a female relation of Dr. Goldsmith, and desired that on her return to Ireland she would procure authentic particulars of the life of her celebrated relation. Concerning her is the following letter :—

LETTER 265.

TO GEORGE STEEVENS, ESQ.

"Feb. 23, 1777.

"DEAR SIR,—You will be glad to hear that from Mrs. Goldsmith, whom we lamented as drowned, I have received a letter full of gratitude to us all, with promise to make the enquiries which we recommended to her. I would have had the honour of conveying this intelligence to Miss Caulfield, but that her letter is not at hand, and I know not the direction. You will tell the good news.—I am, Sir, &c.

"SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 266.

FROM MR. BOSWELL.

"Edinburgh, Feb. 14, 1777.

"MY DEAR SIR,—My state of epistolary accounts with you at present is extraordinary. The balance, as to number, is on your side. I am indebted to you for two letters: one dated the 16th of November, upon which very day I wrote to you, so that our letters were exactly exchanged; and one dated the 21st of December last.

"My heart was warmed with gratitude by the truly kind contents of both of them; and it is amazing and vexing that I have allowed so much time to elapse without writing to you. But delay is inherent in me, by nature or by bad habit. I waited till I should have an opportunity of paying you my compliments on a new year. I have procrastinated till the year is no longer new.

"Dr. Memis's cause was determined against him, with 40*l.* costs. The lord president and two other of the judges, dissented from the majority upon this ground: that although there may have been no intention to injure him by

calling him *doctor of medicine* instead of *physician*; yet, as he remonstrated against the designation before the charter was printed off, and represented that it was disagreeable, and even hurtful to him, it was ill-natured to refuse to alter it, and let him have the designation to which he was certainly entitled. My opinion is, that our court has judged wrong. The defendants were *in mala fide*, to persist in naming him in a way that he disliked. You remember poor Goldsmith, when he grew important, and wished to appear *Doctor Major*, could not bear your calling him *Goldy*. Would it not have been wrong to have named him so in your 'Preface to Shakspeare,' or in any serious permanent writing of any sort? The difficulty is, whether an action should be allowed on such petty wrongs. *De minimis non curat lex*.

"The negro cause is not yet decided. A memorial is preparing on the side of slavery. I shall send you a copy as soon as it is printed. Maclaurin is made happy by your approbation of his memorial for the black. Macquarry was here in the winter, and we passed an evening together. The sale of his estate cannot be prevented

"Sir Allan Maclean's suit against the duke of Argyle, for recovering the ancient inheritance of his family, is now fairly before all our judges. I spoke for him yesterday, and Maclaurin to-day; Crosbie spoke to-day against him. Three more counsel are to be heard, and next week the cause will be determined. I send you the informations, or cases, on each side, which I hope you will read. You said to me, when we were under Sir Allan's hospitable roof, 'I will help you with my pen' You said it with a generous glow; and though his Grace of Argyle did afterwards mount you upon an excellent horse, upon which 'you looked like a bishop,' you must not swerve from your purpose at Inch Kenneth. I wish you may understand the points at issue, amidst our Scotch law principles and phrases." [Here followed a full state of the case, in which I endeavoured to make it as clear as I could to an Englishman who had no knowledge of the formularies and technical language of the law of Scotland.]

"I shall inform you how the cause is decided here. But as it may be brought under the review of our judges, and is certainly to be carried by appeal to the House of Lords, the assistance of such a mind as yours will be of consequence. Your paper on *Vicious Intromission* is a noble proof of what you can do even in Scotch law.

"I have not yet distributed all your books. Lord Hailes and Lord Monboddo have each received one and return you thanks. Monboddo dined with me lately, and having drunk tea, we were a good while by ourselves; and as I knew that he had read the 'Journey' superficially, as he did not talk of it as I wished, I brought it to him, and read aloud several passages; and then he talked so, that I told him he was to have a copy from the author. He begged that might be marked on it. I ever am, my dear Sir, &c.

"JAMES BOSWELL."

LETTER 267.

FROM SIR ALEXANDER DICK.

" Prestonfield, Feb. 17, 1777.

" SIR,—I had yesterday the honour of receiving your book of your 'Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland,' which you were so good as to send me, by the hands of our mutual friend, Mr. Boswell, of Auchinleck; for which I return you my most hearty thanks; and, after carefully reading it over again, shall deposit it in my little collection of choice books, next our worthy friend's 'Journey to Corsica.' As there are many things to admire in both performances, I have often wished that no travels or journey should be published but those undertaken by persons of integrity, and capacity to judge well and describe faithfully, and in good language, the situation, condition, and manners of the countries passed through. Indeed, our country of Scotland, in spite of the union of the crowns, is still in most places so devoid of clothing or cover from hedges and plantations, that it was well you gave your readers a sound *monitoire* with respect to that circumstance. The truths you have told, and the purity of the language in which they are expressed, as your 'Journey' is universally read, may, and already appear to have, a very good effect. For a man of my acquaintance, who has the largest nursery for trees and hedges in this country, tells me, that of late the demand upon him for these articles is doubled, and sometimes tripled. I have, therefore, listed Dr. Samuel Johnson in some of my memorandums of the principal planters and favourers of the enclosures, under a name which I took the liberty to invent from the Greek, *Pappadendron*. Lord Auchinleck and some few more are of the list. I am told that one gentleman in the shire of Aberdeen, viz. Sir Archibald Grant, has planted above fifty millions of trees on a piece of very wild ground at Monimusk; I must enquire if he has fenced them well, before he enters my list; for that is the soul of enclosing. I began myself to plant a little, our ground being too valuable for much, and that is now fifty years ago; and the trees, now in my seventy-fourth year, I look up to with reverence, and show them to my eldest son, now in his fifteenth year; and they are the full height of my country-house here, where I had the pleasure of receiving you, and hope again to have that satisfaction with our mutual friend, Mr. Boswell. I shall always continue, with the truest esteem, dear Doctor, &c.

" ALEXANDER DICK."

LETTER 268.

TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

" Feb. 18, 1777.

" DEAR SIR,—It is so long since I heard anything from you,¹ that I am not easy about it: write something to me next post. When you sent your last letter, everything seemed to be mending; I hope nothing has lately grown

¹ For a character of this very amiable man, see the Biographical Dictionary. He died in 1785.

² By the then course of the post, my long letter of the 14th had not yet reached him.

worse. I suppose young Alexander continues to thrive, and Veronica is now very pretty company. I do not suppose the lady is yet reconciled to me; yet let her know that I love her very well, and value her very much.

"Dr. Blair is printing some sermons. If they are all like the first, which I have read, they are *sermones aurei ac auro magis aurei*. It is excellently written both as to doctrine and language. Mr. Watson's book¹ seems to be much esteemed.

"Poor Beauclerk still continues very ill. Langton lives on as he used to do. His children are very pretty, and, I think, his lady loses her Scotch.² Paoli I never see.

"I have been so distressed by difficulty of breathing, that I lost, as was computed, six-and-thirty ounces of blood in a few days. I am better, but not well. I wish you would be vigilant and get me Graham's 'Telemachus,' that was printed at Glasgow, a very little book; and 'Johnstoni Poemata,' another little book, printed at Middleburgh.

"Mrs. Williams sends her compliments, and promises that when you come hither she will accommodate you as well as ever she can in the old room. She wishes to know whether you sent her book to Sir Alexander Gordon. My dear Boswell, do not neglect to write to me; for your kindness is one of the pleasures of my life, which I should be sorry to lose. I am, &c.

"SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 269.

FROM MR. BOSWELL.

"Edinburgh, Feb. 24, 1777.

"DEAR SIR,—Your letter dated the 18th instant, I had the pleasure to receive last post. Although my late long neglect, or rather delay, was truly culpable, I am tempted not to regret it, since it has produced me so valuable a proof of your regard. I did, indeed, during that inexcusable silence, some times divert the reproaches of my own mind, by fancying that I should hear again from you, enquiring with some anxiety about me, because, for aught you knew, I might have been ill.

"You are pleased to show me that my kindness is of some consequence to you. My heart is elated at the thought. Be assured, my dear Sir, that my affection and reverence for you are exalted and steady. I do not believe that a more perfect attachment ever existed in the history of mankind. And it is a noble attachment; for the attractions are genius, learning, and piety.

"Your difficulty of breathing alarms me, and brings into my imagination an event, which, although, in the natural course of things, I must expect at some period, I cannot view with composure.

"My wife is much honoured by what you say of her. She begs you may

¹ History of Philip the Second.

² Lady Rothes was a native of England, but she had lived long in Scotland, and never it is said, entirely lost the accent she had acquired there.—C.

accept of her best compliments. She is to send you some marmalade of oranges of her own making. I ever am, my dear sir, &c.

"JAMES BOSWELL."

LETTER 270.

TO MRS. ASTON.

"Bolt-Court, March 8, 1777.

"DEAR MADAM.—As we pass on through the journey of life, we meet, and ought to expect, many unpleasing occurrences, but many likewise encounter us unexpected. I have this morning heard from Lucy of your illness. I heard, indeed, in the next sentence that you are to a great degree recovered. May your recovery, dearest Madam, be complete and lasting! The hopes of paying you the annual visit is one of the few solaces with which my imagination gratifies me, and my wish is, that I may find you happy.

"My health is much broken; my nights are very restless, and will not be made more comfortable by remembering that one of the friends whom I value most is suffering equally with myself. Be pleased, dearest lady, to let me know how you are; and if writing be troublesome, get dear Mrs. Gastrell to write for you. I hope she is well and able to assist you; and wish that you may so well recover, as to repay her kindness, if she should want you. May you both live long happy together! I am, dear Madam, &c.

"SAM. JOHNSON,"

LETTER 271.

TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"March 14, 1777.

"DEAR SIR,—I have been much pleased with your late letter, and am glad that my old enemy, Mrs. Boswell, begins to feel some remorse. As to Miss Veronica's Scotch, I think it cannot be helped. An English maid you might easily have; but she would still imitate the greater number, as they would be likewise those whom she must most respect. Her dialect will not be gross. Her mamma has not much Scotch, and you have yourself very little. I hope she knows my name, and does not call me *Johnston*.¹

"The immediate cause of my writing is this: One Shaw, who seems a modest and decent man, has written an Erse Grammar, which a very learned Highlander, Macbean, has, at my request, examined and approved. The book is very little, but Mr. Shaw has been persuaded by his friends to set it at half a guinea, though I advised only a crown, and thought myself liberal. You, whom the author considers as a great encourager of ingenious men, will receive a parcel of his proposals and receipts. I have undertaken to give you notice of them, and to solicit your countenance. You must ask no poor man, because the price is really too high. Yet such a work deserves patronage.

¹ *Johnson* is the most common English formation of the surname from *John*; *Johnston* the Scotch. My illustrious friend observed that many North Britons pronounced his name in their own way.—B. The names are radically different; one is patronymic, John's *son*; the other local, John's *town*.—C. 1835.

"It is proposed to augment our club from twenty to thirty, of which I am glad; for as we have several in it whom I do not much like to consort with,¹ I am for reducing it to a mere miscellaneous collection of conspicuous men, without any determinate character. I am, dear Sir, most affectionately yours,

"SAM. JOHNSON.

"My respects to Madam, to Veronica, to Alexander, to Euphemia, to David."

LETTER 272.

TO MRS. ASTON.

"March 15, 1777.

"DEAREST MADAM,—The letter with which I was favoured, by the kindness of Mrs. Gastrell, has contributed very little to quiet my solicitude. I am indeed more frightened than by Mrs. Porter's account. Yet, since you have had strength to conquer your disorder so as to obtain a partial recovery, I think it reasonable to believe, that the favourable season which is now coming forward may restore you to your former health. Do not, dear Madam, lose your courage, nor by despondence or inactivity give way to the disease. Use such exercise as you can bear, and excite cheerful thoughts in your own mind. Do not harass your faculties with laborious attention; nothing is, in my opinion, of more mischievous tendency in a state of body like yours, than deep meditation or perplexing solicitude. Gaiety is a duty, when health requires it. Entertain yourself as you can with small amusements or light conversation, and let nothing but your devotion ever make you serious. But while I exhort you, my dearest lady, to merriment, I am very serious myself. The loss or danger of a friend is not to be considered with indifference; but I derive some consolation from the thought, that you do not languish unattended; that you are not in the hands of strangers or servants, but have a sister at hand to watch your wants and supply them. If, at this distance, I can be of any use, by consulting physicians, or for any other purpose, I hope you will employ me.

"I have thought on a journey to Staffordshire; and hope, in a few weeks, to climb Stow Hill, and to find there the pleasure which I have so often found. Let me hear again from you. I am, dear Madam, your most humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 273.

FROM MR. BOSWELL.

"Edinburgh April 4, 1777

(After informing him of the death of my little son David, and that I could not come to London this spring:) "I think it hard that I should be a whole year without seeing you. May I presume to petition for a meeting with you in the autumn? You have, I believe, seen all the cathedrals in England, except that of Carlisle. If you are to be with Dr. Taylor, at Ashbourne, it would not

¹ On account of their differing from him as to religion and politics.—B. Messrs. Burke, Beauclerk, Fox, &c. It was about this time that Mr. Sheridan, Lord Upper-Ossory, Dr. Marlay (afterwards Bishop of Waterford), and Mr. Dunning were admitted.—C.

be a great journey to come thither. We may pass a few most agreeable days there by ourselves, and I will accompany you a good part of the way to the southward again. Pray think of this.

"You forget that Mr. Shaw's Erse Grammar was put into your hands by myself last year. Lord Eglintounne put it into mine. I am glad that Mr. Macbean approves of it. I have received Mr. Shaw's proposals for its publication, which I can perceive are written *by the hand of a master*. . . . Pray get for me all the editions of 'Walton's Lives.' I have a notion that the republication of them with notes will fall upon me, between Dr. Horne and Le Hailes."¹

Mr. Shaw's Proposals† for an "Analysis of the Scotch Celtic Language" were thus illuminated by the pen of Johnson:—

"Though the Erse dialect of the Celtic language has, from the earliest times, been spoken in Britain, and still subsists in the northern parts and adjacent islands, yet, by the negligence of a people rather warlike than lettered, it has hitherto been left to the caprice and judgment of every speaker, and has floated in the living voice, without the steadiness of analogy, or direction of rules.

"An Erse Grammar is an addition to the stores of literature; and its author hopes for the indulgence always shown to those that attempt to do what was never done before. If his work shall be found defective, it is at least all his own: he is not, like other grammarians, a compiler or transcriber; what he delivers, he has learned by attentive observation among his countrymen, who, perhaps, will be themselves surprised to see that speech reduced to principles, which they have used only by imitation.

"The use of this book will, however, not be confined to the mountains and islands: it will afford a pleasing and important subject of speculation to those whose studies lead them to trace the affinity of languages, and the migrations of the ancient races of mankind."

LETTER 274.

FROM MR. BOSWELL.

"Glasgow, April 24th, 1777.

"MY DEAR SIR,—Our worthy friend Thrale's death having appeared in the newspapers, and been afterwards contradicted, I have been placed in a state of very uneasy uncertainty, from which I hoped to be relieved by you; but my hopes have as yet been vain. How could you omit to write to me on such an occasion? I shall wait with anxiety.—I am going to Auchinleck to stay a

¹ None of the persons here mentioned executed the work which they had in contemplation. Walton's valuable book, however, has been correctly republished in quarto and octavo, with notes and illustrations by the Rev. Mr. Fouch.—M. It was also printed at the Clarendon press, in 1806, in two volumes, 12mo., and in one volume, 8vo., 1824.—HALL.

fortnight with my father. It is better not to be there very long at one time. But frequent renewals of attention are agreeable to him.

"Pray tell me about this edition of 'English Poets, with a Preface, biographical and critical, to each Author, by Samuel Johnson, LL.D.' which I see advertised. I am delighted with the prospect of it. Indeed, I am happy to feel that I am capable of being so much delighted with literature. But is not the charm of this publication chiefly owing to the *magnum nomen* in the front of it?"

"What do you say of Lord Chesterfield's Memoirs and last letters?"¹

"My wife has made marmalade of oranges for you. I left her and my daughters and Alexander all well yesterday. I have taught Veronica to speak of you thus; Dr. Johnson, not Johnston.—I remain, &c.

"JAMES BOSWELL."

LETTER 275.

TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"May 8, 1777.

"DEAR SIR,—The story of Mr. Thrale's death, as he had neither been sick nor in any other danger, made so little impression upon me, that I never thought about obviating its effects on anybody else. It is supposed to have been produced by the English custom² of making April fools; that is, of sending one another on some foolish errand on the first of April.

"Tell Mrs. Boswell that I shall taste her marmalade cautiously at first. *Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes*. Beware, says the Italian proverb, of a reconciled enemy. But when I find it does me no harm, I shall then receive it, and be thankful for it, as a pledge of firm, and, I hope, of unalterable kindness. She is, after all, a dear, dear lady.

"Please to return Dr. Blair thanks for his sermons. The Scotch write English wonderfully well.

"Your frequent visits to Auchinleck, and your short stay there, are very laudable and very judicious. Your present concord with your father gives me great pleasure; it was all that you seemed to want.

"My health is very bad, and my nights are very unquiet. What can I do to mend them? I have for this summer nothing better in prospect than a journey into Staffordshire and Derbyshire, perhaps with Oxford and Birmingham in my way.

"Make my compliments to Miss Veronica; I must leave it to her philosophy to comfort you for the loss of little David. You must remember, that to keep three out of four is more than your share. Mrs. Thrale has but four out of eleven.

"I am engaged to write little Lives, and little Prefaces, to a little edition of

¹ Dr. Maty's posthumous edition of the Memoirs and Miscellaneous Works of Lord Chesterfield, published by Mr. Justamond early in 1777.—C.

² Not merely an English custom—the French have the same; but what we call *April fools* they term "*poisson d'Avril*."—C.

the English Poets. I think I have persuaded the booksellers to insert something of Thomson; and if you could give me some information about him, for the life which we have is very scanty, I should be glad. I am, dear Sir, &c.,
 "SAM JOHNSON."

To those who delight in tracing the progress of works of literature, it will be an entertainment to compare the limited design with the ample execution of that admirable performance, "The Lives of the English Poets," which is the richest, most beautiful, and, indeed, most perfect production of Johnson's pen. His notion of it at this time appears in the preceding letter. He has a memorandum in this year:—

"May 29, Easter-eve, I treated with booksellers on a bargain, but the time was not long." (Pr. and Med. p. 155.)

The bargain was concerning that undertaking; but his tender conscience seems alarmed, lest it should have intruded too much on his devout preparation for the solemnity of the ensuing day. But, indeed, very little time was necessary for Johnson's concluding a treaty with the booksellers; as he had, I believe, less attention to profit from his labours, than any man to whom literature has been a profession. I shall here insert, from a letter to me from my worthy friend Mr. Edward Dilly, though of a later date, an account of this plan so happily conceived, since it was the occasion of procuring for us an elegant collection of the best biography and criticism of which our language can boast.

LETTER 276.

TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"Southill, Sep. 30, 1777.

"DEAR SIR,—You find by this letter that I am still in the same calm retreat, from the noise and bustle of London, as when I wrote to you last. I am happy to find you had such an agreeable meeting with your old friend Dr. Johnson: I have no doubt your stock is much increased by the interview; few men, say, I may say, scarcely any man has got that fund of knowledge and entertainment as Dr. Johnson in conversation. When he opens freely, every one is attentive to what he says, and cannot fail of improvement as well as pleasure.

"The edition of the poets, now printing, will do honour to the English press; and a concise account of the life of each author, by Dr. Johnson, will be a very valuable addition, and stamp the reputation of this edition superior to anything that is gone before. The first cause that gave rise to this under-

taking, I believe, was owing to the little trifling edition of the poets, printing by the Martins at Edinburgh, and to be sold by Bell in London. Upon examining the volumes which were printed, the type was found so extremely small, that many persons could not read them: not only this inconvenience attended it, but the inaccuracy of the press was very conspicuous. These reasons, as well as the idea of an invasion of what we call our Literary Property, induced the London booksellers to print an elegant and accurate edition of all the English poets of reputation, from Chaucer to the present time.

"Accordingly a select number of the most respectable booksellers met on the occasion: and, on consulting together, agreed, that all the proprietors of copyright in the various poets should be summoned together; and when their opinions were given, to proceed immediately on the business. Accordingly a meeting was held, consisting of about forty of the most respectable booksellers of London, when it was agreed that an elegant and uniform edition of 'The English Poets' should be immediately printed, with a concise account of the life of each author, by Dr. Samuel Johnson; and that three persons should be deputed to wait upon Dr. Johnson, to solicit, him to undertake the 'Lives,' viz. T. Davies, Strahan, and Cadell. The Doctor very politely undertook it, and seemed exceedingly pleased with the proposal.

"As to the terms, it was left entirely to the Doctor to name his own; he mentioned two hundred guineas;¹ it was immediately agreed to; and a farther compliment, I believe, will be made him. A committee was likewise appointed to engage the best engravers, viz. Bartolozzi, Sherwin, Hall, &c. Likewise another committee for giving directions about the paper, printing, &c.; so that the whole will be conducted with spirit, and in the best manner, with respect to authorship, editorship, engravings, &c., &c. My brother will give you a list of the poets we mean to give, many of which are within the time of the Act of Queen Anne, which Martin and Bell cannot give, as they have no property in them: the proprietors are almost all the booksellers in London of consequence.

"I am, dear Sir, ever yours,

"EDWARD DILLY."

I shall afterwards have occasion to consider the extensive and varied range which Johnson took, when he was once led upon ground which he trod with a peculiar delight, having long been intimately acquainted with all the circumstances of it that could interest and please.

¹ Johnson's moderation in demanding so small a sum is extraordinary. Had he asked one thousand, or even fifteen hundred guineas, the booksellers, who knew the value of his name, would doubtless have readily given it. They have probably got five thousand guineas by this work in the course of twenty-five years.—M. It must be recollected that Johnson at first intended very short prefaces—he afterwards expanded his design.—O.

LETTER 277

TO CHARLES O'CONNOR ESQ.¹

"May 19, 1777.

"SIR,—Having had the pleasure of conversing with Dr. Campbell about your character and your literary undertaking, I am resolved to gratify myself by renewing a correspondence which began and ended a great while ago, and ended, I am afraid, by my fault; a fault which, if you have not forgotten it, you must now forgive.

"If I have ever disappointed you, give me leave to tell you that you have likewise disappointed me. I expected great discoveries in Irish antiquity, and large publications in the Irish language; but the world still remains as it was, doubtful and ignorant. What the Irish language is in itself, and to what languages it has affinity, are very interesting questions, which every man wishes to see resolved that has any philological or historical curiosity. Dr. Leland begins his history too late: the ages which deserve an exact inquiry are those times (*for such there were*) when Ireland was the school of the west, the quiet habitation of sanctity and literature. If you could give a history, though imperfect, of the Irish nation, from its conversion to Christianity to the invasion from England, you would amplify knowledge with new views and new objects. Set about it, therefore, if you can: do what you can easily do without anxious exactness. Lay the foundation, and leave the superstructure to posterity.—I am, Sir, your humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

Early in this year came out, in two volumes quarto, the posthumous works of the learned Dr. Zachary Pearce, bishop of Rochester; being "A commentary, with Notes, on the four Evangelists and the Acts of the Apostles," with other theological pieces. Johnson had now an opportunity of making a grateful return to that excellent prelate,² who, we have seen, was the only person who gave

¹ Mr. Joseph Cooper Walker, of the treasury, Dublin, who obligingly communicated to me this and a former letter from Dr. Johnson to the same gentleman (for which see vol. I. p. 259), writes to me as follows:—"Perhaps it would gratify you to have some account of Mr. O'Connor. He is an amiable, learned, venerable old gentleman, of an independent fortune, who lives at Belanagar, in the county of Roscommon: he is an admired writer, and a member of the Irish Academy. The above letter is alluded to in the preface to the second edition of his 'Dissert.' p. 8." Mr. O'Connor afterwards died at the age of eighty-two, July 1, 1791. See a well-drawn character of him in the "Gentleman's Magazine" for August, 1791.

² Mrs. Thrale, in one of her letters, repeats a curious anecdote of this prelate, which she probably had from Dr. Johnson himself: "We will act as Dr. Zachary Pearce, the famous bishop of Rochester, did, when he lost the wife he so much loved—call for one glass to the health of her who is departed never more to return, and then go quietly back to the usual duties of life, and forbear to mention her again from that time to the last day of it."—*Lett.* v. ii. p. 213 But he survived his lady but a few months, and his death was (if not occasioned) certainly accelerated by her loss. She died 23d Oct. 1778, and he 29th June, 1774, after a union of fifty-one years.—C

him any assistance in the compilation of his dictionary. The bishop he left some account of his life and character, written by himself. To this Johnson made some valuable additions, † and also furnished to the editor, the Rev. Mr. Derby,¹ a dedication, † which I shall here insert ; both because it will appear at this time with peculiar propriety, and because it will tend to propagate and increase that “fervour of *loyalty*,” which in me, who boast of the name of Tory, is not only a principle, but a passion.

“To the King.”

“SIR,—I presume to lay before your majesty the last labours of a learned bishop, who died in the toils and duties of his calling. He is now beyond the reach of all earthly honours and rewards ; and only the hope of inciting others to imitate him, makes it now fit to be remembered, that he enjoyed in his life the favour of your majesty.

“The tumultuary life of princes seldom permits them to survey the wide extent of national interest, without losing sight of private merit ; to exhibit qualities which may be imitated by the highest and humblest of mankind ; and to be at once amiable and great.

“Such characters, if now and then they appear in history, are contemplated with admiration. May it be the ambition of all your subjects to make haste with their tribute of reverence ! and as posterity may learn from your majesty how kings should live, may they learn likewise from your people how they should be honoured !—I am, may it please your majesty, with the most profound respect, your majesty’s most dutiful and devoted subject and servant.”

In the summer he wrote a prologue, * which was spoken before “A Word to the Wise,” a comedy by Mr. Hugh Kelly, which had been brought upon the stage in 1770 ; but he being a writer for ministry in one of the newspapers, it fell a sacrifice to popular fury, and, in the playhouse phrase, was *damned*. By the generosity of Mr. Harris, the proprietor of Covent-garden theatre, it was now exhibited for one night, for the benefit of the author’s widow and children. To conciliate the favour of the audience was the intention of Johnson’s prologue, which, as it is not long, I shall here insert, as a proof that his poetical talents were in no degree impaired.

¹ Rector of Southfleet and Longfield in Kent. He had married Bishop Pearce’s niece. Johnson, in a letter to Mrs. Thrale, says, “My clerical friend Derby is dead.” He died in 1778.—C.

" This night presents a play, which public rage,
 Or right or wrong, once hooted from the stage ;
 From zeal or malice now no more we dread,
 For English vengeance *wars not with the dead.*
 A generous foe regards with pitying eye
 The man whom fate has laid where all must lie.
 To wit, reviving from its author's dust,
 Be kind, ye judges, or at least be just :
 Let no renewed hostilities invade
 Th' oblivious grave's inviolable shade.
 Let one great payment every claim appease,
 And him who cannot hurt, allow to please ;
 To please by scenes, unconscious of offence,
 By harmless merriment or useful sense.
 Where aught of bright or fair the piece displays,
 Approve it only ;—'tis too late too praise.
 If want of skill or want of care appear,
 Forbear to hiss ;—the poet cannot hear.
 By all, like him, must praise and blame be found,
 At last, a fleeting gleam or empty sound :
 Yet then shall calm reflection bless the night
 When liberal pity dignified delight ;
 When pleasure fired her torch at virtue's flame,
 And mirth was bounty with an humbler name."¹

¹ Mr. Murphy related in Dr. Johnson's hearing one day, and he did not deny it, that when Murphy joked him for having been so diligent of late between Dodd's sermon and Kelly's prologue, Dr. Johnson replied, " Why, Sir, when they come to me with a dead staymaker and a dying parson, what can a man do ?"—FROZEL.

CHAPTER XIV.

1777.

Richard Brinsley Sheridan—Savage's "Sir Thomas Overbury"—Thomson—Mrs Strickland—The Townley Collection—Dr. Dodd—Boswell at the Tomb of Melancthon—Isaac De Groot—Dr. Watts—Letter to Mrs. Boswell—Visit to Ashbourne—"Harry Jackson"—Sidney's "Arcadia"—Projected Trip to the Baltic—Grief for the Loss of Relatives and Friends—Incomes of Curates—Johnson's humane and zealous Interference in behalf of Dr. Dodd.

A CIRCUMSTANCE which could not fail to be very pleasing to Johnson occurred this year. The tragedy of "Sir Thomas Overbury," written by his early companion in London, Richard Savage, was brought out with alterations at Drury-lane theatre.¹ The prologue to it was written by Mr. Richard Brinsley Sheridan ; in which, after describing very pathetically the wretchedness of

"Ill-fated Savage, at whose birth was given
No parent but the Muse, no friend but Heaven,"

he introduced an elegant compliment to Johnson on his Dictionary, that wonderful performance which cannot be too often or too highly praised; of which Mr. Harris, in his "Philological Inquiries" (part i. chap. iv.,) justly and liberally observes, "Such is its merit, that our language does not possess a more copious, learned, and valuable work." The concluding lines of this prologue were these :—

"So pleads the tale² that gives to future times
The son's misfortunes and the parent's crimes ;
There shall his fame (if own'd to-night) survive,
Fix'd by the hand that bids our language live."

Mr. Sheridan here at once did honour to his taste and to his

¹ Our author has here fallen into a slight mistake. The prologue to this revived tragedy being written by Mr. Sheridan, Mr. Boswell very naturally supposed that it was performed at Drury-lane theatre. But in fact, as Mr. Kemble observes to me, it was acted at the theatre Covent-garden.—M.

² "Life of Richard Savage, by Dr. Johnson."—SHERIDAN.

liberality of sentiment, by showing that he was not prejudiced from the unlucky difference which had taken place between his worthy father and Dr. Johnson.¹ I have already mentioned that Johnson was very desirous of reconciliation with old Mr. Sheridan. It will, therefore, not seem at all surprising that he was zealous in acknowledging the brilliant merit of his son. While it had as yet been displayed only in the drama, Johnson proposed him as a member of the Literary Club, observing, that "He who has written the two best comedies of his age is surely a considerable man." And he had, accordingly, the honour to be elected ; for an honour it undoubtedly must be allowed to be, when it is considered of whom that society consists, and that a single black ball excluded a candidate.

LETTER 278.

FROM MR. BOSWELL.

"July 9, 1777.

"MY DEAR SIR,—For the health of my wife and children I have taken the little country-house at which you visited my uncle, Dr. Boswell, who, having lost his wife, is gone to live with his son. We took possession of our villa about a week ago. We have a garden of three quarters of an acre, well stocked with fruit-trees and flowers, and gooseberries and currants, and pease and beans, and cabbages, &c. &c., and my children are quite happy. I now write to you in a little study, from the window of which I see around me a verdant grove and beyond it the lofty mountain called *Arthur's Seat*.

"Your last letter, in which you desire me to send you some additional information concerning Thomson, reached me very fortunately just as I was going to Lanark, to put my wife's two nephews, the young Campbells, to school there, under the care of Mr. Thomson, the master of it, whose wife is sister to the author of 'The Seasons.' She is an old woman ; but her memory is very good ; and she will with pleasure give me for you every particular that you wish to know, and she can tell. Pray then take the trouble to send me such questions as may lead to biographical materials. You say that the *Life* which we have of Thomson is scanty. Since I received your letter, I have read his *Life*, published under the name of Cibber, but, as you told me really written by a Mr. Shiels ; that written by Dr. Murdoch ; one prefixed to an edition of the 'Seasons,' published at Edinburgh, which is compounded of both, with the addition of an anecdote of Quin's relieving Thomson from prison ; the abridgment of

¹ He likewise made some retribution to Dr. Johnson for the attack he had meditated, about two years before, on the pamphlet he had published about the American question, entitled, "Taxation no Tyranny." Some fragments found among Sheridan's papers show that he had intended answering this pamphlet in no very courteous way. See *Moore's Life*, vol. i. p. 152.—HALL.

Murdoch's account of him, in the 'Biographia Britannica,' and another abridgment of it in the 'Biographical Dictionary,' enriched with Dr. Joseph Warton's critical panegyric on the 'Seasons,' in his 'Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope:' from all these it appears to me that we have a pretty full account of this poet. However, you will, I doubt not, show me many blanks, and I shall do what can be done to have them filled up. As Thomson never returned to Scotland (which *you* will think very wise,) his sister can speak from her own knowledge only as to the early part of his life. She has some letters from him, which may probably give light as to his more advanced progress, if she will let us see them, which I suppose she will. I believe George Lewis Scott and Dr. Armstrong are now his only surviving companions, while he lived in and about London; and they, I dare say, can tell more of him than is yet known. My own notion is, that Thomson was a much coarser man than his friends are willing to acknowledge. His 'Seasons' are indeed full of elegant and pious sentiments; but a rank soil, nay, a dunghill, will produce beautiful flowers.

"Your edition¹ of the 'English Poets' will be very valuable on account of the 'Prefaces and Lives. But I have seen a specimen of an edition of the Poets at the Apollo press, at Edinburgh, which, for excellence in printing and engraving, highly deserves a liberal encouragement.

"Most sincerely do I regret the bad health and bad rest with which you have been afflicted; and I hope you are better. I cannot believe that the prologue which you generously gave to Mr. Kelly's widow and children the other day is the effusion of one in sickness and in disquietude: but external circumstances are never sure indications of the state of man. I send you a letter which I wrote to you two years ago at Wilton; and did not send it at the time, for fear of being reprov'd as indulging too much tenderness, and one written to you at the tomb of Melancthon, which I kept back, lest I should appear at once too superstitious and too enthusiastic. I now imagine that perhaps they may please you.

"You do not take the least notice of my proposal for our meeting at Carlisle.² Though I have meritoriously refrained from visiting London this year,

¹ Dr. Johnson was not the *editor* of this collection of the English Poets; he merely furnished the biographical prefaces with which it is enriched, as is rightly stated in a subsequent page. He, indeed, from a virtuous motive, recommended the works of four or five poets (whom he has named) to be added to the collection; but he is no otherwise answerable for any which are found there, or any which are omitted. The poems of Goldsmith (whose life I know he intended to write, for I collected some materials for it by his desire,) were omitted in consequence of a petty exclusive interest in some of them, vested in Mr. Carnan, a bookseller.—M.

² Dr. Johnson had himself talked of our seeing Carlisle together. *High* was a favourite word of his to denote a person of rank. He said to me, "Sir, I believe we may meet at the house of a Roman Catholic lady in Cumberland; a high lady, Sir." I afterwards discovered that he meant Mrs. Strickland, sister of Charles Townley, Esq. whose very noble collection of statues and pictures is not more to be admired, than his extraordinary and polite readiness in showing it, which I and several of my friends have agreeably experienced

I ask you if it would not be wrong that I should be two years without having the benefit of your conversation, when, if you come down as far as Derbyshire, we may meet at the expense of a few days' journeying and not many pounds. I wish you to see Carlise, which made me mention that place. But if you have not a desire to complete your tour of English cathedrals, I will take a larger share of the road between this place and Ashbourne. So tell me where you will fix for our passing a few days by ourselves. Now don't cry 'foolish fellow,' or 'idle dog.' Chain your humour, and let your kindness play.

"You will rejoice to hear that Miss Macleod, of Rasay, is married to Colonel Mure Campbell, an excellent man, with a pretty good estate of his own, and the prospect of having the Earl of Loudoun's fortune and honours. Is not this a noble lot for our fair Hebridean? How happy am I that she is to be in Ayrshire! We shall have the Laird of Rasay, and old Malcolm, and I know not how many gallant Macleods, and bagpipes, &c. &c. at Auchinleck. Perhaps you may meet them all there.

"Without doubt you have read what is called 'The Life of David Hume, written by himself, with the letter from Adam Smith subjoined to it. Is not this an age of daring effrontery? My friend Mr. Anderson, professor of natural philosophy at Glasgow, at whose house you and I supped, and to whose care Mr. Windham, of Norfolk, was intrusted at that university, paid me a visit lately; and after we had talked with indignation and contempt of the poisonous productions with which this age is infested, he said there was now an excellent opportunity for Dr. Johnson to step forth. I agreed with him that you might knock Hume's and Smith's heads together, and make vain and ostentatious infidelity exceedingly ridiculous. Would it not be worth your while to crush such noxious weeds in the moral garden?

"You have said nothing to me of Dr. Dodd. I know not how you think on that subject; though the newspapers give us a saying of yours in favour of mercy to him. But I own I am very desirous that the royal prerogative of remission of punishment should be employed to exhibit an illustrious instance of the regard which God's *Viceregent* will ever show to piety and virtue. If for ten righteous men the Almighty would have spared Sodom, shall not a thousand acts of goodness done by Dr. Dodd counterbalance one crime? Such an instance would do more to encourage goodness, than his execution would do to deter from vice. I am not afraid of any bad consequences to society; for who will persevere for a long course of years in a distinguished discharge of religious duties with a view to commit a forgery with impunity?

"Pray make my best compliments acceptable to Mr. and Mrs. Thrale, by assuring them of my hearty joy that the *master*, as you call him, is alive. I hope I shall often taste his champagne—*soberly*.

They who are possessed of valuable stores of gratification to persons of taste should exercise their benevolence in imparting the pleasure. Grateful acknowledgments are due to Welbore Ellis Agar, Esq. for the liberal access which he is pleased to allow to his exquisite collection of pictures.

"I have not heard from Langton for a long time. I suppose he is as usual,

'Studious the busy moments to deceive.'

"I remain, my dear Sir, your most affectionate, &c.

"JAMES BOSWELL."

On the 23d of June, I again wrote to Dr. Johnson, enclosing a shipmaster's receipt for a jar of orange-marmalade, and a large packet of Lord Haile's "Annals of Scotland."

LETTER 279.

TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"June 28, 1777.

"DEAR SIR,—I have just received your packet from Mr. Thrale's, but have not daylight enough to look much into it. I am glad that I have credit enough with Lord Hailes to be trusted with more copy. I hope to take more care of it than of the last. I return Mrs. Boswell my affectionate thanks for her present, which I value as a token of reconciliation.

"Poor Dodd was put to death yesterday, in opposition to the recommendation of the jury,—the petition of the city of London,—and a subsequent petition signed by three-and-twenty thousand hands. Surely the voice of the public, when it calls so loudly, and calls only for mercy, ought to be heard.

"The saying that was given me in the papers I never spoke; but I wrote many of his petitions, and some of his letters. He applied to me very often. He was, I am afraid, long flattered with hopes of life; but I had no part in the dreadful delusion; for as soon as the king had signed his sentence, I obtained from Mr. Chamier¹ an account of the disposition of the court towards him, with a declaration that there *was no hope even of a respite*. This letter immediately was laid before Dodd; but he believed those whom he wished to be right, as it is thought, till within three days of his end. He died with pious composure and resolution. I have just seen the ordinary that attended him. His address to his fellow-convicts offended the methodists; but he had a Moravian with him much of his time. His moral character is very bad; I hope all is not true that is charged upon him. Of his behaviour in prison an account will be published.

"I give you joy of your country-house and your pretty garden, and hope sometime to see you in your felicity. I was much pleased with your two letters that had been kept so long in store;² and rejoice at Miss Rasay's advancement, and wish Sir Allan success.

¹ Mr. Chamier was then Under-Secretary of State.—O.

² Since they have been so much honoured by Dr. Johnson, I shall here insert them:—

LETTER 280.

FROM MR. BOSWELL.

"Sunday, Sept. 30, 1764.

"MY EVER DEAR AND MUCH-RESPECTED SIR,—You know my solemn enthusiasm of mind. You love me for it, and I respect myself for it, because in so far I resemble Mr. Johnson,

"I hope to meet you somewhere towards the north, but am loath to come quite to Carlisle. Can we not meet at Manchester? But we will settle it in some other letters.

"Mr. Seward,¹ a great favourite at Streatham, has been, I think, enkindled by our travels with a curiosity to see the highlands. I have given him letters to you and Beattie. He desires that a lodging may be taken for him at Edinburgh against his arrival. He is just setting out. Langton has been exercising the militia. Mrs. Williams is, I fear, declining. Dr. Lawrence says he can do no more. She is gone to summer in the country, with as many conveniences about her as she can expect; but I have no great hope. We must all die: may we all be prepared!

"I suppose Miss Boswell reads her book, and young Alexander takes to his learning. Let me hear about them; for everything that belongs to you, belongs in a more remote degree, and not, I hope, very remote, to dear Sir, yours affectionately,
SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 282.

TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"June 24, 1777.

"DEAR SIR,—This gentleman is a great favourite at Streatham, and, therefore, you will easily believe that he has very valuable qualities. Our narrative

You will be agreeably surprised, when you learn the reason of my writing this letter. I am at Wittenberg, in Saxony. I am in the old church where the reformation was first preached, and where some of the reformers lie interred. I cannot resist the serious pleasure of writing to Mr. Johnson from the tomb of Melancthon. My paper rests upon the grave-stone of that great and good man, who was undoubtedly the worthiest of all the reformers. He wished to reform abuses which had been introduced into the church; but had no private resentment to gratify. So mild was he, that when his aged mother consulted him with anxiety on the perplexing disputes of the times, he advised her 'to keep to the old religion.' At this tomb, then, my ever dear and respected friend! I vow to thee an eternal attachment. It shall be my study to do what I can to render your life happy: and if you die before me, I shall endeavour to do honour to your memory; and, elevated by the remembrance of you, persist in noble piety. May God, the father of all beings, ever bless you! and may you continue to love your most affectionate friend and devoted servant,
JAMES BOSWELL."

LETTER 281.

FROM THE SAME.

"Wilton-house, April 22, 1775.

"MY DEAR SIR,—Every scene of my life confirms the truth of what you have told me, 'there is no certain happiness in this state of being.' I am here, amidst all that you know is at Lord Pembroke's; and yet I am weary and gloomy. I am just setting out for the house of an old friend in Devonshire, and shall not get back to London for a week yet. You said to me last Good Friday, with a cordiality that warmed my heart, that if I came to settle in London we should have a day fixed every week to meet by ourselves and talk freely. To be thought worthy of such a privilege cannot but exalt me. During my present absence from you, while, notwithstanding the gaiety which you allow me to possess, I am darkened by temporary clouds, I beg to have a few lines from you; a few lines merely of kindness, as a *viaticum* till I see you again. In your 'Vanity of Human Wishes,' and in Parnell's 'Contentment,' I find the only sure means of enjoying happiness; or, at least, the hopes of happiness. I ever am, with reverence and affection, most faithfully yours,
JAMES BOSWELL."

¹ William Seward, Esq. editor of "Anecdotes of some Distinguished Persons," &c.

nas kindled him with a desire of visiting the Highlands, after having already seen a great part of Europe. You must receive him as a friend, and when you have directed him to the curiosities of Edinburgh, give him instructions and recommendations for the rest of his journey. I am, dear Sir, &c.

SAM. JOHNSON."

Johnson's benevolence to the unfortunate was, I am confident, as steady and active as that of any of those who had been most eminently distinguished for that virtue. Innumerable proofs of it I have no doubt will be for ever concealed from mortal eyes. We may, however, form some judgment of it from the many and various instances which have been discovered. One, which happened in the course of this summer, is remarkable from the name and connection of the person who was the object of it. The circumstance to which I allude is ascertained by two letters, one to Mr. Langton, and another to the Rev. Dr. Vyse, rector of Lambeth, son of the respectable clergyman at Lichfield, who was contemporary with Johnson, and in whose father's family Johnson had the happiness of being kindly received in his early years.

LETTER 283.

TO BENNET LANGTON, ESQ.

"June 29, 1777.

"DEAR SIR,—I have lately been much disordered by a difficulty of breathing, but am now better. I hope your house is well.

"You know we have been talking lately of St. Cross, at Winchester: I have an old acquaintance whose distress makes him very desirous of an hospital, and I am afraid I have not strength enough to get him into the Chartreux. He is a painter, who never rose higher than to get his immediate living; and from that, at eighty-three, he is disabled by a slight stroke of the palsy, such as does not make him at all helpless on common occasions, though his hand is not steady enough for his art. My request is, that you will try to obtain a promise of the next vacancy from the Bishop of Chester. It is not a great thing to ask, and I hope we shall obtain it. Dr. Warton has promised to favour him with his notice, and I hope he may end his days in peace. I am, Sir, &c.

SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 284.

TO THE REV. DR. VYSE.

"July 9, 1777.

"SIR,—I doubt not but you will readily forgive me for taking the liberty of requesting your assistance in recommending an old friend to his grace the archbishop as governor of the Charterhouse. His name is De Groot;¹ he was

¹ It appears that Isaac de Groot was admitted into the Charterhouse, where he died Feb. 8

born at Gloucester; I have known him many years. He has all the common claims to charity, being old, poor, and infirm to a great degree. He has likewise another claim, to which no scholar can refuse attention; he is by several descents the nephew of Hugo Grotius; of him from whom perhaps every man of learning has learnt something. Let it not be said that in any lettered country a nephew of Grotius asked a charity and was refused. I am, reverend Sir, &c.

"SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 285.

TO THE REV. DR. VYSE.

"July 22, 1777.

"If any notice should be taken of the recommendation which I took the liberty of sending you, it will be necessary to know that Mr. De Groot is to be found at No. 8, in Pye-street, Westminster. This information, when I wrote, I could not give you; and being going soon to Lichfield, think it necessary to be left behind me. More I will not say. You will want no persuasion to succour the nephew of Grotius. I am, Sir, &c.

SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 286.

DR. VYSE TO MR. BOSWELL.

"Lambeth, June 9, 1787.

"SIR,—I have searched in vain for the letter which I spoke of, and which I wished, at your desire, to communicate to you. It was from Dr. Johnson, to return me thanks for my application to Archbishop Cornwallis in favour of poor De Groot. He rejoices at the success it met with, and is lavish in the praise he bestows upon his favourite, Hugo Grotius. I am really sorry that I cannot find this letter, as it is worthy of the writer. That which I send you enclosed¹ is at your service. It is very short, and will not perhaps be thought of any consequence, unless you should judge proper to consider it as a proof of the very humane part which Dr. Johnson took in behalf of a distressed and deserving person. I am, Sir, &c.

W. VYSE."

LETTER 287.

TO MR. EDWARD DILLY.

"Bolt Court, July 7, 1777.

SIR,—To the collection of English poets I have recommended the volume of Dr. Watts to be added: his name has long been held by me in veneration, and I would not willingly be reduced to tell of him only that he was born and died.

1779. The *Gent. Mag.* in announcing his death, calls him "the great grandson of the learned Grotius."—O.

¹ The preceding letter.

² Dr. Vyse, at my request, was so obliging as once more to endeavour to recover the letter of Johnson to which he alludes, but without success; for April 28, 1800, he wrote to me thus: "I have again searched, but in vain, for one of his letters, in which he speaks in his own nervous style of Hugo Grotius. De Groot was clearly a descendant of the family of Grotius, and Archbishop Cornwallis willingly complied with Dr. Johnson's request."—M. These letters appear in the *Gent. Mag.* 1787 and 1799, dated from London only, and seem to have been addressed to Mr. Sharpe.—O.

Yet of his life I know very little, and therefore must pass him in a manner very unworthy of his character, unless some of his friends will favour me with the necessary information. Many of them must be known to you; and by your influence perhaps I may obtain some instruction: my plan does not exact much; but I wish to distinguish Watts, a man who never wrote but for a good purpose. Be pleased to do for me what you can. I am, Sir, &c.

"SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 288.

FROM MR. BOSWELL.

"Edinburgh, July 15, 1777.

"MY DEAR SIR,—The fate of poor Dr. Dodd made a dismal impression upon my mind. I had sagacity enough to divine that you wrote his speech to the recorder, before sentence was pronounced. I am glad you have written so much for him; and I hope to be favoured with an exact list of the several pieces when we meet.

"I received Mr. Seward as the friend of Mr. and Mrs. Thrale, and as a gentleman recommended by Dr. Johnson to my attention. I have introduced him to Lord Kames, Lord Monboddo, and Mr. Nairne. He is gone to the Highlands with Dr. Gregory; when he returns I shall do more for him.

"Sir Allan Maclean has carried that branch of his cause, of which we had good hopes; the president and one other judge only were against him. I wish the house of lords may do as well as the court of session has done. But Sir Allan has not the lands of *Brolos* quite cleared by this judgment, till a long account is made up of debts and interests on the one side, and rents on the other. I am, however, not much afraid of the balance.

"Macquarry's estates, Staffa and all, were sold yesterday, and bought by a Campbell. I fear he will have little or nothing left out of the purchase-money.

"I send you the case against the negro, by Mr. Cullen, son to Dr. Cullen, in opposition to Maclaurin's for liberty, of which you have approved. Pray read this, and tell me what you think as a *politician*, as well as a *poet*, upon the subject.

"Be so kind as to let me know how your time is to be distributed next autumn. I will meet you at Manchester, or where you please; but I wish you would complete your tour of the cathedrals, and come to Carlisle, and I will accompany you a part of the way homewards. I am ever, &c.,

"JAMES BOSWELL."

LETTER 289.

TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"July 22, 1777.

"DEAR SIR,—Your notion of the necessity of any early interview is very pleasing to both my vanity and tenderness. I shall, perhaps, come to Carlisle another year; but my money has not held out so well as it used to do. I shall go to Ashbourne, and I purpose to make Dr. Taylor invite you. If you live

awhile with me at his house, we shall have much time to ourselves, and our stay will be no expence to us or him. I shall leave London the 28th; and, after some stay at Oxford and Lichfield, shall probably come to Ashbourne about the end of your session; but of all this you shall have notice. Be satisfied we will meet somewhere. What passed between me and poor Dr. Dodd, you shall know more fully when we meet.

"Of lawsuits there is no end: poor Sir Allan must have another trial; for which, however, his antagonist cannot be much blamed, having two judges on his side. I am more afraid of the debts than of the house of lords. It is scarcely to be imagined to what debts will swell, that are daily increasing by small additions, and how carelessly in a state of desperation debts are contracted. Poor Macquarry was far from thinking that when he sold his islands he should receive nothing. For what were they sold? and what was their yearly value? The admission of money into the Highlands will soon put an end to the feudal modes of life, by making those men landlords who were not chiefs. I do not know that the people will suffer by the change; but there was in the patriarchal authority something venerable and pleasing. Every eye must look with pain on a *Campbell* turning the *Macquarries* at will out of their *sedes avitæ*, their hereditary island.

"Sir Alexander Dick is the only Scotsman liberal enough not to be angry that I could not find trees where trees were not. I was much delighted by his kind letter.

"I remember Rasay with too much pleasure not to partake of the happiness of any part of that amiable family. Our ramble in the Highlands hangs upon my imagination: I can hardly help imagining that we shall go again. Pennant seems to have seen a great deal which we did not see: when we travel again let us look better about us.

"You have done right in taking your uncle's house. Some change in the form of life gives from time to time a new epocha of existence. In a new place there is something new to be done, and a different system of thought rises in the mind. I wish I could gather currants in your garden. Now fit up a little study, and have your books ready at hand: do not spare a little money, to make your habitation pleasing to yourself.

"I have dined lately with poor dear Langton. I do not think he goes on well. His table is rather coarse, and he has his children too much about him.' But he is a very good man.

"Mrs. Williams is in the country, to try if she can improve her health: she

¹ This very just remark I hope will be constantly held in remembrance by parents, who are in general too apt to indulge their own fond feelings for their children at the expense of their friends. The common custom of introducing them after dinner is highly injudicious. It is agreeable enough that they should appear at any other time; but they should not be suffered to poison the moments of festivity by attracting the attention of the company, and in a manner compelling them from politeness to say what they do not think.

is very ill. Matters have come so about, that she is in the country with very good accommodation; but age, and sickness, and pride, have made her so peevish, that I was forced to bribe the maid to stay with her by a secret stipulation of half-a-crown a week over her wages.

"Our club ended its session about six weeks ago. We now only meet to dine once a fortnight. Mr. Dunning, the great lawyer,¹ is one of our members. The Thrals are well. I long to know how the negro's cause will be decided. What is the opinion of Lord Auchinleck, or Lord Hailes, or Lord Monboddo? am, dear Sir, &c.,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 290.

TO MRS. BOSWELL.

"July 23, 1777.

"MADAM,—Though I am well enough pleased with the taste of sweetmeats, very little of the pleasure which I received at the arrival of your jar of marmalade arose from eating it. I received it as a token of friendship, as a proof of reconciliation, things much sweeter than sweetmeats; and upon this consideration I return you, dear Madam, my sincerest thanks. By having your kindness I think I have a double security for the continuance of Mr. Boswell's, which it is not to be expected that any man can long keep, when the influence of a lady so highly and so justly valued, operates against him. Mr. Boswell will tell you that I was always faithful to your interest, and always endeavoured to exalt you in his estimation. You must now do the same for me. We must, all help one another, and you must now consider me as, dear Madam, your, &c.

"SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 291.

FROM MR. BOSWELL.

"Edinburgh, July 23, 1777.

"MY DEAR SIR,—This is the day on which you were to leave London, and I have been amusing myself in the intervals of my law-drudgery with figuring you in the Oxford post-coach. I doubt, however, if you have had so merry a journey as you and I had in that vehicle last year, when you made me so much sport with Gwyn, the architect. Incidents upon a journey are recollected with peculiar pleasure: they are preserved in brisk spirits, and come up again in our minds, tinctured with that gaiety, or at least that animation, with which we first perceived them." (I added, that something had occurred which I was afraid might prevent me from meeting him;² and that my wife had been affected with complaints which threatened a consumption, but was now better.)

¹ Created in 1782 Lord Ashburton. —O

² "Aug. 4, 1777.—Boswell's project is disconcerted by a visit from a relation of Yorkshire, whom he mentions as the head of his clan. Bozzy, you know, makes a huge bustle about all his own motions and all mine. I have enclosed a letter to pacify him, and reconcile him to the uncertainties of human life."—*Let. to Mr. Thrale.*

LETTER 292.

TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"Oxford, Aug. 4, 1777.

"DEAR SIR,—Do not disturb yourself about our interviews; I hope we shall have many: nor think it anything hard or unusual that your design of meeting me is interrupted. We have both endured greater evils, and have greater evils to expect.

"Mrs. Boswell's illness makes a more serious distress. Does the blood rise from her lungs or from her stomach? From little vessels broken in the stomach there is no danger. Blood from the lungs is, I believe, always frothy, as mixed with wind. Your physicians know very well what is to be done. The loss of such a lady would, indeed, be very afflictive, and I hope she is in no danger. Take care to keep her mind as easy as possible.

"I have left Langton in London. He has been down with the militia, and is again quiet at home, talking to his little people, as I suppose you do sometimes. Make my compliments to Miss Veronica.¹ The rest are too young for ceremony.

"I cannot but hope that you have taken your country house at a very seasonable time, and that it may conduce to restore or establish Mrs. Boswell's health, as well as provide room and exercise for the young ones. That you and your lady may both be happy, and long enjoy your happiness, is the sincere and earnest wish of, dear Sir, your most, &c.

"SAM. JOHNSON."

TO DR. JOHNSON.

(Informing him that my wife had continued to grow better, so that my alarming apprehensions were relieved: and that I hoped to disengage myself from the other embarrassment which had occurred, and therefore requesting to know particularly when he intended to be at Ashbourne.)

LETTER 293

TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"Aug. 30, 1777.

"DEAR SIR,—I am this day come to Ashbourne, and have only to tell you, that Dr. Taylor says you shall be welcome to him, and you know how welcome you will be to me. Make haste to let me know when you may be expected. Make my compliments to Mrs. Boswell, and tell her I hope we shall be at variance no more. I am, dear Sir, &c.

SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 294.

TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"Ashbourne, Sept. 1, 1777.

"DEAR SIR,—On Saturday I wrote a very short letter, immediately upon my arrival hither, to show you that I am not less desirous of the interview

¹ This young lady, the author's eldest daughter, and at this time about five years old, died in London, of a consumption, four months after her father, Sept. 26, 1795.—M.

than yourself. Life admits not of delays; when pleasure can be had, it is fit to catch it: every hour takes away part of the things that please us, and, perhaps, part of our disposition to be pleased. When I came to Lichfield, I found my old friend Harry Jackson dead. It was a loss, and a loss not to be repaired, as he was one of the companions of my childhood. I hope we may long continue to gain friends; but the friends which merit or usefulness can procure us are not able to supply the place of old acquaintance, with whom the days of youth may be retraced, and those images revived which gave the earliest delight. If you and I live to be much older, we shall take great delight in talking over the Hebridean Journey. In the meantime it may not be amiss to contrive some other little adventure, but what it can be I know not; leave it, as Sidney says,

‘To virtue, fortune, time, and woman’s breast;’¹

for I believe Mrs. Boswell must have some part in the consultation. One thing you will like. The doctor, so far as I can judge, is likely to leave us enough to ourselves. He was out to-day before I came down, and, I fancy, will stay out to dinner. I have brought the papers about poor Dodd, to show you, but you will soon have despatched them.

“Before I came away, I sent poor Mrs. Williams into the country, very ill of a pituitous defluxion, which wastes her gradually away, and which her physician declares himself unable to stop. I supplied her as far as could be desired with all conveniences to make her excursion and abode pleasant and useful. But I am afraid she can only linger a short time in a morbid state of weakness and pain.

“The Thrales, little and great, are all well, and purpose to go to Bright-helmstone at Michaelmas. They will invite me to go with them, and, perhaps, I may go, but I hardly think I shall like to stay the whole time; but of futurity we know but little.

“Mrs. Porter is well; but Mrs. Aston, one of the ladies at Stowhill, has been

¹ “Who doth desire that chaste his wife should bee,
First be he true, for truth doth truth deserve;
Then be he such, as she his worth may see,
And, alwaies one, credit with her preserve;
Not toying kynd, nor causelessly unkynd,
Not stirring thoughts, nor yet denying right,
Nor spying faults, nor in plaine errors blind,
Never hard hand, nor ever rayns (reins) too light;
As far from want, as far from vaine expence,
Th’ one doth enforce, the t’other doth entice:
Allow good companie, but drive from thence
All filthie mouths that glorie in their vice:
This done, thou hast no more but leave the rest
To nature, fortune, time, and woman’s breast.”

struck with a palsy, from which she is not likely ever to recover. How soon may such a stroke fall upon us!

Write to me, and let us know how soon we may expect you. I am, dear Sir, your most humble servant,

“SAM. JOHNSON.”

LETTER 295.

FROM MR. BOSWELL.

“Edinburgh, Sept. 9, 1777.

(After informing him that I was to set out next day, in order to meet him at Ashbourne:—) “I have a present for you from Lord Hailes; the fifth book of ‘Lactantius,’ which he has published with Latin notes. He is also to give you a few anecdotes for your ‘Life of Thomson,’ who I find was private tutor to the present Earl of Hadington, Lord Hailes’s cousin, a circumstance not mentioned by Dr. Murdoch. I have keen expectations of delight from your edition of the English Poets.

“I am sorry for poor Mrs. Williams’s situation. You will, however, have the comfort of reflecting on your kindness to her. Mr. Jackson’s death, and Mrs. Aston’s palsy, are gloomy circumstances. Yet surely we should be habituated to the uncertainty of life and health. When my mind is unclouded by melancholy, I consider the temporary distresses of this state of being as ‘light afflictions,’ by stretching my mental view into that glorious after-existence, when they will appear to be as nothing. But present pleasures and present pains must be felt. I lately read ‘Rasselas’ over again with satisfaction.

“Since you are desirous to hear about Macquarry’s sale, I shall inform you particularly. The gentleman who purchased Ulva is Mr. Campbell of Auchnaba: our friend Macquarry was proprietor of two-thirds of it, of which the rent was 156*l.* 5*s.* 1½*d.* This parcel was set up at 4069*l.* 5*s.* 1*d.*, but it sold for no less than 5540*l.* The other third of Ulva, with the island of Staffa, belonged to Macquarry of Ormaig. Its rent, including that of Staffa, 83*l.* 12*s.* 2½*d.*—set up at 2178*l.* 16*s.* 4*d.*—sold for no less than 3540*l.* The Laird of Col wished to purchase Ulva, but he thought the price too high. There may, indeed, be great improvements made there, both in fishing and agriculture; but the interest of the purchase-money exceeds the rent so very much, that I doubt if the bargain will be profitable. There is an island called Little Colonsay, of 10*l.* yearly rent, which I am informed has belonged to the Macquarrys of Ulva for many ages, but which was lately claimed by the Presbyterian Synod of Argyll, in consequence of a grant made to them by Queen Anne. It is believed that their claim will be dismissed, and that Little Colonsay will also be sold for the advantage of Macquarry’s creditors. What think you of purchasing this island, and endowing a school or college there, the master to be a clergyman of the church of England? How venerable would such an institution make the name of DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON in the Hebrides! I have, like yourself, a wonderful pleasure in recollecting our travels in those islands. The pleasure

is, I think, greater than it reasonably should be, considering that we had not much either of beauty or elegance to charm our imaginations, or of rude novelty to astonish. Let us, by all means, have another expedition. I shrink a little from our scheme of going up the Baltic.¹ I am sorry you have already been in Wales; for I wish to see it. Shall we go to Ireland, of which I have seen but little? We shall try to strike out a plan when we are at Ashbourne. I am ever your most faithful servant,

"JAMES BOSWELL."

LETTER 296.

TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"Ashbourne, Sept. 11, 1777.

"DEAR SIR,—I write to be left at Carlisle, as you direct me; but you cannot have it. Your letter, dated Sept. 6, was not at this place till this day, Thursday, Sept. 11; and I hope you will be here before this is at Carlisle." However, what you have not going, you may have returning; and as I believe I shall not love you less after our interview, it will then be as true as it is now, that I set a very high value upon your friendship, and count your kindness as one of the chief felicities of my life. Do not fancy that an intermission of writing is a decay of kindness. No man is always in a disposition to write; nor has any man at all times something to say.

"That distrust which intrudes so often on your mind is a mode of melancholy, which, if it be the business of a wise man to be happy, it is foolish to indulge; and, if it be a duty to preserve our faculties entire for their proper use, it is criminal. Suspicion is very often an useless pain. From that, and all other pains, I wish you free and safe; for I am, dear Sir, &c.,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

¹ It appears that Johnson, now in his sixty-eighth year, was seriously inclined to realise the project of our going up the Baltic, which I had started when we were in the Isle of Sky; for he thus writes to Mrs. Thrale:—

"Ashbourne, 18th Sept. 1777.—Boswell, I believe, is coming. He talks of being here to-day: I shall be glad to see him; but he shrinks from the Baltic expedition, which, I think, is the best scheme in our power: what we shall substitute, I know not. He wants to see Wales; but, except the woods of *Bachyeraigh*, what is there in Wales that can fill the hunger of ignorance, or quench the thirst of curiosity? We may, perhaps, form some scheme or other; but, in the phrase of *Hockley in the Hole*, it is pity he has not a *better bottom*."

Such an ardour of mind, and vigour of enterprise, is admirable at any age; but more particularly so at the advanced period at which Johnson was then arrived. I am sorry now that I did not insist on our executing that scheme. Besides the other objects of curiosity and observation, to have seen my illustrious friend received, as he probably would have been, by a prince so eminently distinguished for his variety of talents and acquisitions as the late King of Sweden, and by the Empress of Russia, whose extraordinary abilities, information, and magnanimity, astonish the world, would have afforded a noble subject for contemplation and record. This reflection may possibly be thought too visionary by the more sedate and cold-blooded part of my readers; yet I own I frequently indulge it with an earnest, unavailing regret.

² It so happened. The letter was forwarded to my house at Edinburgh.

LETTER 297.

TO MRS. ASTON.

Ashbourne, Sept. 18, 1777.

"DEAR MADAM,—As I left you so much disordered, a fortnight is a long time to be without any account of your health. I am willing to flatter myself that you are better, though you gave me no reason to believe that you intended to use any means for your recovery. Nature often performs wonders, and will, I hope, do for you more than you seem inclined to do for yourself.

"In this weakness of body, with which it has pleased God to visit you, he has given you great cause of thankfulness, by the total exemption of your mind from all effects of your disorder. Your memory is not less comprehensive or distinct, nor your reason less vigorous and acute, nor your imagination less active and sprightly than in any former time of your life. This is a great blessing, as it respects enjoyment of the present; and a blessing yet far greater, as it bestows power and opportunity to prepare for the future.

"All sickness is a summons. But as you do not want exhortations, I will send you only my good wishes, and exhort you to believe the good wishes very sincere, of, dear Madam, &c.,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

On Sunday evening, Sept. 14, I arrived at Ashbourne, and drove directly up to Dr. Taylor's door. Dr. Johnson and he appeared before I got out of the post-chaise, and welcomed me cordially.

I told them that I had travelled all the preceding night, and gone to bed at Leek, in Staffordshire; and that when I rose to go to church in the afternoon, I was informed there had been an earthquake, of which, it seems, the shock had been felt in some degree at Ashbourne. JOHNSON. "Sir, it will be much exaggerated in public talk: for in the first place, the common people do not accurately adapt their thoughts to the objects; nor, secondly, do they accurately adapt their words to their thoughts: they do not mean to lie; but taking no pains to be exact, they give you very false accounts. A great part of their language is proverbial. If anything rocks at all, they say *it rocks like a cradle*; and in this way they go on."

The subject of grief for the loss of relations and friends being introduced, I observed that it was strange to consider how soon it in general wears away. Dr. Taylor mentioned a gentleman of the neighbourhood as the only instance he had ever known of a person who had endeavoured to *retain* grief. He told Dr. Taylor, that after his lady's death, which affected him deeply, he *resolved* that the grief, which he cherished with a kind of sacred fondness, should be

lasting ; but that he found he could not keep it long. JOHNSON. "All grief for what cannot in the course of nature be helped soon wears away ; in some sooner, indeed, in some later ; but it never continues very long, unless where there is madness, such as will make a man have pride so fixed in his mind as to imagine himself a king ; or any other passion in an unreasonable way : for all unnecessary grief is unwise, and therefore will not be long retained by a sound mind. If, indeed, the cause of our grief is occasioned by our own misconduct, if grief is mingled with remorse of conscience, it should be lasting." BOSWELL. "But, Sir, we do not approve of a man who very soon forgets the loss of a wife or a friend." JOHNSON. "Sir, we disapprove of him, not because he soon forgets his grief, for the sooner it is forgotten the better ; but because we suppose, that if he forgets his wife or his friend soon, he has not much affection for them."

I was somewhat disappointed in finding that the edition of the "English Poets," for which he was to write prefaces and lives, was not an undertaking directed by him, but that he was to furnish a preface and life to any poet the booksellers pleased. I asked him if he would do this to any dunce's works, if they should ask him. JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir ; and *say* he was a dunce." My friend seemed now not much to relish talking of this edition.

On Monday, Sept. 15,¹ Dr. Johnson observed, that everybody commended such parts of his "Journey to the Western Islands" as were in their own way. "For instance," said he, Mr. Jackson (the all-knowing) told me there was more good sense upon trade in it, than he should hear in the House of Commons in a year, except from Burke. Jones commended the part which treats of language ; Burke that which describes the inhabitants of mountainous countries."

After breakfast, Johnson carried me to see the garden belonging to the school of Ashbourne, which is very prettily formed upon a

¹ "Last night came Boswell. I am glad that he has come, and seems to be very brisk and lively, and laughs a little at ———."—*Lett.* vol. i. p. 369. Probably his host Dr. Taylor—between whom and Boswell there seems to have been no great cordiality, and it may be suspected that Boswell does not take much pains to set Dr. Taylor's merits in the best light. He was Johnson's earliest and most constant friend, and read the funeral service over him, with, however, as the bystanders thought, too little feeling.—C.

bank, rising gradually behind the house. The Rev. Mr. Langley, the head-master accompanied us.

While we sat basking in the sun upon a seat here, I introduced a common subject of complaint, the very small salaries which many curates have ; and I maintained, that no man should be invested with the character of a clergyman, unless he has a security for such an income as will enable him to appear respectable ; that, therefore, a clergyman should not be allowed to have a curate, unless he gives him a hundred pounds a year ; if he cannot do that, let him perform the duty himself. JOHNSON. "To be sure, Sir, it is wrong that any clergyman should be without a reasonable income ; but as the church revenues were sadly diminished at the Reformation, the clergymen who have livings cannot afford, in many instances, to give salaries to curates, without leaving themselves too little ; and, if no curate were to be permitted unless he had a hundred pounds a year, their number would be very small, which would be a disadvantage, as then there would not be such choice in the nursery for the church, curates being candidates for the higher ecclesiastical offices, according to their merit and good behaviour." He explained the system of the English hierarchy exceedingly well. "It is not thought fit," said he, "to trust a man with the care of a parish till he has given proof as a curate that he shall deserve such a trust." This is an excellent theory ; and if the practice were according to it, the church of England would be admirable indeed. However, as I have heard Dr. Johnson observe as to the universities, bad practice does not infer that the constitution is bad.

We had with us at dinner several of Dr. Taylor's neighbours, good civil gentlemen, who seemed to understand Dr. Johnson very well, and not to consider him in the light that a certain person [Mr. George Garrick] did, who being struck, or rather stunned by his voice and manner, when he was afterwards asked what he thought of him, answered, "He's a tremendous companion."

Johnson told me, that "Taylor was a very sensible acute man, and had a strong mind : that he had great activity in some respects, and yet such a sort of indolence, that if you should put a pebble upon his chimney-piece, you will find it there, in the same state, a year afterwards."

And here is a proper place to give an account of Johnson's humane and zealous interference in behalf of the Reverend Dr. William Dodd, formerly prebendary of Brecon, and chaplain in ordinary to his majesty ; celebrated as a very popular preacher, an encourager of charitable institutions, and author of a variety of works, chiefly theological. Having unhappily contracted expensive habits of living, partly occasioned by licentiousness of manners, he in an evil hour, when pressed by want of money, and dreading an exposure of his circumstances, forged a bond, of which he attempted to avail himself to support his credit, flattering himself with hopes that he might be able to repay its amount without being detected. The person whose name he thus rashly and criminally presumed to falsify was the Earl of Chesterfield, to whom he had been tutor, and who he perhaps, in the warmth of his feelings, flattered himself would have generously paid the money in case of an alarm being taken, rather than suffer him to fall a victim to the dreadful consequences of violating the law against forgery, the most dangerous crime in a commercial country : but the unfortunate divine had the mortification to find that he was mistaken. His noble pupil appeared against him, and he was capitally convicted.

Johnson told me that Dr. Dodd was very little acquainted with him, having been but once in his company, many years previous to this period (which was precisely the state of my own acquaintance with Dodd ;) but in his distress he bethought himself of Johnson's persuasive power of writing, if haply it might avail to obtain for him the royal mercy. He did not apply to him directly, but, extraordinary as it may seem, through the late Countess of Harrington,¹ who wrote a letter to Johnson, asking him to employ his pen in favour of Dodd. Mr. Allen, the printer, who was Johnson's landlord and next neighbour in Bolt-court, and for whom he had much kindness, was one of Dodd's friends, of whom, to the credit of humanity be it recorded, that he had many who did not desert him, even after his infringement of the law had reduced him to the state of a man under sentence of death. Mr. Allen told me that he carried

¹ Caroline, eldest daughter of Charles Fitzroy, Duke of Grafton, and wife of William, the second Earl of Harrington.—M.

Lady Harrington's letter to Johnson ; that Johnson read it, walking up and down his chamber, and seemed much agitated, after which he said, "I will do what I can ;" and certainly he did make extraordinary exertions.

He this evening, as he had obligingly promised in one of his letters, put into my hands the whole series of his writings upon this melancholy occasion, and I shall present my readers with the abstract which I made from the collection ; in doing which I studied to avoid copying what had appeared in print, and now make part of the edition of "Johnson's Works" published by the booksellers of London, but taking care to mark Johnson's variations in some of the pieces there exhibited.

Dr. Johnson wrote, in the first place, Dr. Dodd's "Speech to the Recorder of London," at the old Bailey, when sentence of death was about to be pronounced upon him.

He wrote also "The Convict's Address to his unhappy Brethren," a sermon delivered by Dr. Dodd in the chapel at Newgate. According to Johnson's manuscript, it began thus after the text, *What shall I do to be saved ?*

"These were the words with which the keeper, to whose custody Paul and Silas were committed by their prosecutors, addressed his prisoners, when he saw them freed from their bonds by the perceptible agency of divine favour, and was, therefore, irresistibly convinced that they were not offenders against the laws, but martyrs to the truth."

Dr. Johnson was so good as to mark for me with his own hand, on a copy of this sermon which is now in my possession, such passages as were added by Dr. Dodd. They are not many : whoever will take the trouble to look at the printed copy, and attend to what I mention, will be satisfied of this.

There is a short introduction by Dr. Dodd, and he also inserted this sentence : "You see with what confusion and dishonour I now stand before you ; no more in the pulpit of instruction, but on this humble seat with yourselves." The *notes* are entirely Dodd's own, and Johnson's writing ends at the words, "the thief whom he pardoned on the cross." What follows was supplied by Dr. Dodd himself.

The other pieces mentioned by Johnson in the above mentioned collection are two letters; one to the Lord Chancellor Bathurst (not Lord North, as is erroneously supposed), and one to Lord Mansfield. A petition from Dr. Dodd to the King. A petition from Mrs. Dodd to the Queen. Observations of some length inserted in the newspapers, on occasion of Earl Percy's having presented to his majesty a petition for mercy to Dodd, signed by twenty thousand people, but all in vain. He told me that he had also written a petition for the city of London; "but (said he, with a significant smile) they *mended it*."¹

The last of these articles which Johnson wrote is "Dr. Dodd's last solemn Declaration," which he left with the sheriff at the place of execution. Here also my friend marked the variations on a copy of that piece now in my possession. Dodd inserted, "I never knew or attended to the calls of frugality, or the needful minuteness of painful economy;" and in the next sentence he introduced the words which I distinguished by italics: "my life for some *few unhappy* years past has been *dreadfully erroneous*." Johnson's expression was *hypocritical*: but his remark on the margin is, "With this he said he could not charge himself."

Having thus authentically settled what part of the "Occasional Papers," concerning Dr. Dodd's miserable situation came from the

¹ Having unexpectedly, by the favour of Mr. Stone, of London Field, Hackney, seen the original in Johnson's handwriting of "The Petition of the City of London to his Majesty, in favour of Dr. Dodd," I now present it to my readers, with such passages as were omitted enclosed in crotchets, and the additions or variations marked in italics:—

"That William Dodd, Doctor of Laws, now lying under sentence of death *in your majesty's gaol of Newgate* for the crime of forgery, has for a great part of his life set a useful and laudable example of diligence in his calling [and, as we have reason to believe, has exercised his ministry with great fidelity and efficacy], *which, in many instances, has produced the most happy effect.*

"That he has been the first institutor [or] *and* a very earnest and active promoter of several modes of useful charity, and [that], therefore [he], may be considered as having been on many occasions a benefactor to the public.

"[That when they consider his past life, they are willing to suppose his late crime to have been, not the consequence of habitual depravity, but the suggestion of some sudden and violent temptation].

"[That] *your petitioners*, therefore, considering his case as, in some of its circumstances, unprecedented and peculiar, *and encouraged by your majesty's known clemency*, [they] most humbly recommend the said William Dodd to [his] *your majesty's* most gracious consideration, in hopes that he will be found not altogether [unfit] *unworthy to stand an example of royal mercy.*"—B.

It does seem that these few alterations were *amendments*.—C.

pen of Johnson, I shall proceed to present my readers with my record of the unpublished writings relating to that extraordinary and interesting matter.

I found a letter to Dr. Johnson from Dr. Dodd, May 23, 1777, in which "The Convict's Address" seems clearly to be meant :—

LETTER 298.

DR. DODD TO DR. JOHNSON.

"I am so penetrated, my ever dear Sir, with a sense of your extreme benevolence towards me, that I cannot find words equal to the sentiments of my heart.

"You are too conversant in the world to need the slightest hint from me of what infinite utility the speech¹ on the awful day has been to me. I experience, every hour, some good effect from it. I am sure that effects still more salutary and important must follow from *your kind and intended favour*. I will labour—God being my helper—to do justice to it from the pulpit. I am sure, had I your sentiments constantly to deliver from thence, in all their mighty force and power, not a soul could be left unconvinced and unpersuaded.

"May God Almighty bless and reward, with his choicest comforts, your philanthropic actions, and enable me at all times to express what I feel of the high and uncommon obligations which I owe to the *first man* in our times!"

On Sunday, June 22, he writes, begging Dr. Johnson's assistance in framing a supplicatory letter to his majesty :

"If his majesty could be moved of his royal clemency to spare me and my family the horrors and ignominy of a *public death*, which the *public* itself is solicitous to wave, and to grant me in some silent distant corner of the globe to pass the remainder of my days in penitence and prayer, I would bless his clemency and be humbled."

This letter was brought to Dr. Johnson when in church. He stooped down and read it,² and wrote, when he went home, the following letter for Dr. Dodd to the king :—

"SIR,—May it not offend your majesty, that the most miserable of men applies himself to your clemency, as his last hope and his last refuge; that your mercy is most earnestly and humbly implored by a clergyman, whom your laws and judges have condemned to the horror and ignominy of a public execution.

¹ His speech at the Old Bailey when found guilty.

² He afterwards expressed a hope that this deviation from the duties of the place would be forgiven him.—C.

"I confess the crime, and own the enormity of its consequences, and the danger of its example. Nor have I the confidence to petition for impunity; but humbly hope, that public security may be established, without the spectacle of a clergyman dragged through the streets, to a death of infamy, amidst the derision of the profligate and profane; and that justice may be satisfied with irrevocable exile, perpetual disgrace, and hopeless penury.

"My life, Sir, has not been useless to mankind. I have benefited many. But my offences against God are numberless, and I have had little time for repentance. Preserve me, Sir, by your prerogative of mercy, from the necessity of appearing unprepared at that tribunal, before which kings and subjects must stand at last together. Permit me to hide my guilt in some obscure corner of a foreign country, where if I can ever attain confidence to hope that my prayers will be heard, they shall be poured with all the fervour of gratitude, for the life and happiness of your majesty.—

"I am, Sir, your majesty's, &c."

LETTER 299.

DR. JOHNSON TO DR. DODD.

"SIR,—I most seriously enjoin you not to let it be at all known that I have written this letter, and to return the copy to Mr. Allen in a cover to me. I hope I need not tell you that I wish it success. But do not indulge hope. Tell nobody."

It happened luckily that Mr. Allen was pitched on to assist in this melancholy office, for he was a great friend of Mr. Akerman, the keeper of Newgate. Dr. Johnson never went to see Dr. Dodd. He said to me, "It would have done *him* more harm than good to Dodd, who once expressed a desire to see him, but not earnestly."

Dr. Johnson on the 20th of June, wrote the following letter:—

LETTER 300. TO THE RIGHT HON. CHARLES JENKINSON.

"SIR,—Since the conviction and condemnation of Dr. Dodd, I have had, by the intervention of a friend, some intercourse with him, and I am sure I shall lose nothing in your opinion by tenderness and commiseration. Whatever be the crime, it is not easy to have any knowledge of the delinquent, without a wish that his life may be spared; at least when no life has been taken away by him. I will, therefore, take the liberty of suggesting some reasons for which I wish this unhappy being to escape the utmost rigour of his sentence.

"He is, so far as I can recollect, the first clergyman of our church who has suffered public execution for immorality; and I know not whether it would not be more for the interests of religion to bury such an offender in the obscurity of perpetual exile, than to expose him in a cart, and on the gallows, to all who for any reason are enemies to the clergy.

"The supreme power has, in all ages, paid some attention to the voice of the people; and that voice does not least deserve to be heard when it calls out for mercy. There is now a very general desire that Dodd's life should be spared. More is not wished; and, perhaps, this is not too much to be granted.

"If you, Sir, have any opportunity of enforcing these reasons, you may, perhaps, think them worthy of consideration: but whatever you determine, I most respectfully entreat that you will be pleased to pardon for this intrusion, Sir, your most obedient and most humble servant, SAM. JOHNSON."

It has been confidently circulated, with invidious remarks, that to this letter no attention whatever was paid by Mr. Jenkinson (afterwards Earl of Liverpool), and that he did not even deign to show the common civility of owning the receipt of it. I could not but wonder at such conduct in the noble lord, whose own character and just elevation in life, I thought, must have impressed him with all due regard for great abilities and attainments. As the story had been much talked of, and apparently from good authority, I could not but have animadverted upon it in this work, had it been as was alleged; but from my earnest love of truth, and having found reason to think that there might be a mistake, I presumed to write to his lordship, requesting an explanation; and it is with the sincerest pleasure that I am enabled to assure the world that there is no foundation for it, the fact being, that owing to some neglect or accident, Johnson's letter never came to Lord Liverpool's hands. I should have thought it strange indeed, if that noble lord had undervalued my illustrious friend; but instead of this being the case, his lordship, in the very polite answer with which he was pleased immediately to honour me, thus expresses himself: "I have always respected the memory of Dr. Johnson, and admire his writings; and I frequently read many parts of them with pleasure and great improvement."

All applications for the royal mercy having failed, Dr. Dodd prepared himself for death; and, with a warmth of gratitude, wrote to Dr. Johnson as follows:

LETTER 301.

FROM DR. DODD.

"June 25, midnight.

"Accept, thou *great and good* heart, my earnest and fervent thanks and prayers for all thy benevolent and kind efforts in my behalf.—Oh! Dr. Johnson! as I sought your knowledge at an early hour in life, would to Heaven I had cultivated the love and acquaintance of so excellent a man!—I pray God

most sincerely to bless you with the highest transports—the infelt satisfaction of *humane* and benevolent exertions!—And admitted, as I trust I shall be, to the realms of bliss before you, I shall hail *your* arrival there with transports, and rejoice to acknowledge that you was my comforter, my advocate, and my friend! God be ever with you!”

Dr. Johnson lastly wrote to Dr. Dodd this solemn and soothing letter :

LETTER 302.

TO THE REV. DR. DODD.

“ June 26, 1777.

“ DEAR SIR,—That which is appointed to all men is now coming upon you. Outward circumstances, the eyes and the thoughts of men, are below the notice of an immortal being about to stand the trial for eternity, before the Supreme Judge of heaven and earth. Be comforted: your crime, morally or religiously considered, has no very deep dye of turpitude. It corrupted no man’s principles; it attacked no man’s life. It involved only a temporary and reparable injury. Of this, and of all other sins, you are earnestly to repent; and may God, who knoweth our frailty, and desireth not our death, accept your repentance, for the sake of his son Jesus Christ our Lord!

“ In requital of those well-intended offices which you are pleased so emphatically to acknowledge, let me beg that you make in your devotions one petition for my eternal welfare. I am, dear Sir, your most, affectionate servant,

“ SAM. JOHNSON.”

Under the copy of this letter I found written, in Johnson’s own hand, “ Next day, June 27, he was executed.”¹

To conclude this interesting episode with an useful application, let us now attend to the reflections of Johnson at the end of the “ Occasional Papers,” concerning the unfortunate Dr. Dodd.²

“ Such were the last thoughts of a man whom we have seen exulting in

¹ That Dr. Johnson should have desired one prayer from Dr. Dodd, who was himself such an atrocious offender, has been very much condemned; but we ought to consider, that Dr. Johnson might, perhaps, have had sufficient reason to believe Dodd to be a sincere penitent, which, indeed, was the case; and, besides, his mind was so softened with pity and compassion for him, so impressed with the awful idea of his situation, the last evening of his life, that he probably did not think of his former transgressions, or thought, perhaps, that he ought not to remember them, when the offender was so soon to appear before the Supreme Judge of heaven and earth. Dr. Johnson told me that Dodd, on reading this letter, gave it into the hands of his wife, with a strong injunction never to part with it; that he had slept during the night, and when he awoke in the morning, he did not immediately recollect that he was to suffer, and when he did, he expressed the utmost horror and agony of mind—outrageously vehement in his speech and in his looks—till he went into the chapel, and on his coming out of it his face expressed the most angelic peace and composure.—REYNOLDS’S *Recoll.*

² See Dr. Johnson’s final opinion concerning Dr. Dodd, *sub* April 18, 1783.—M.

popularity and sunk in shame. For his reputation, which no man can give to himself, those who conferred it are to answer. Of his public ministry the means of judging were sufficiently attainable. He must be allowed to preach well, whose sermons strike his audience with forcible conviction. Of his life, those who thought it consistent with his doctrine did not originally form false notions. He was at first what he endeavoured to make others; but the world broke down his resolution, and he in time ceased to exemplify his own instructions.

“Let those who are tempted to his faults tremble at his punishment; and those whom he impressed from the pulpit with religious sentiments endeavour to confirm them, by considering the regret and self-abhorrence with which he reviewed in prison his deviations from rectitude.”¹

¹ Johnson was deeply concerned at the failure of the petitions in behalf of Dr. Dodd; and asked me at the time, if the request contained in them was not such an one as ought to have been granted to the prayer of twenty-three thousand subjects: to which I answered, that the subscription of popular petitions was a thing of course, and that, therefore, the difference between twenty and twenty thousand names was inconsiderable. He further censured the clergy very severely, for not interposing in his behalf, and said, “that their inactivity arose from a paltry fear of being reproached with partiality towards one of their own order.” But although he assisted in the solicitations for pardon, yet, in his private judgment, he thought Dodd unworthy of it; having been known to say, that had he been the adviser of the king he should have told him, that, in pardoning Dodd, his justice, in consigning the Perreaus to their sentence would have been called in question.—HAWKINS.

Dr. Dodd was born May 29, 1729, and died June 27, 1777, in the forty-ninth year of his age. He married a Miss Perkins from Durham. Left in sorrow, poverty, and disgrace, reason forsook her, and she died a wretched maniac at Ilford, in Essex, July 14, 1794.—**NOBLE.**

CHAPTER XV.

1777.

Mr. Fitzherbert—Hamilton of Bangour—Bleeding—Hume—Fear of Death—Duties of a Biographer—Stuart Family—Birth-days—Warton's Poems—Keddlestone—Derby—Shaving—Nichols's "De Animâ Medicâ"—Dr. Dodd—Blair—Goldsmith—Monboddo's "Air-bath"—Early-rising—Sleep—Water-drinking—Rutty's "Spiritual Diary"—Autobiographers—Imitators of Johnson's Style—Biographia Britannica—Melancholy and Madness—London Life—Professor of the Law—Employment—Dr. Taylor's Sermons—Actors.

JOHNSON gave us this evening, in his happy discriminative manner, a portrait of the late Mr. Fitzherbert of Derbyshire. "There was," said he, "no sparkle, no brilliancy in Fitzherbert; but I never knew a man who was so generally acceptable. He made everybody quite easy, overpowered nobody by the superiority of his talents, made no man think worse of himself by being his rival, seemed always to listen, did not oblige you to hear much from him, and did not oppose what you said. Everybody liked him; but he had no *friends*, as I understand the word, nobody with whom he exchanged intimate thoughts. People were willing to think well of everything about him. A gentleman was making an affecting rant, as many people do, of great feelings about 'his dear son,' who was at school near London; how anxious he was lest he might be ill, and what he would give to see him. 'Can't you,' said Fitzherbert, 'take a post-chaise and go to him?' This, to be sure, *finished* the affected man, but there was not much in it.¹ However, this circulated as wit for a whole winter, and I believe part of a summer too;

¹ Dr. Gisborne, physician to his Majesty's household, has obligingly communicated to me a fuller account of this story than had reached Dr. Johnson. The affected gentleman was the late John Gilbert Cooper, Esq. author of a Life of Socrates, and of some poems in Dodsley's collection. Mr. Fitzherbert found him one morning, apparently, in such violent agitation, on account of the indisposition of his son, as to seem beyond the power of comfort. At length, however, he exclaimed, "I'll write an elegy." Mr. Fitzherbert, being satisfied by this of the sincerity of his emotions, slyly said, "Had you not better take a post-chaise, and go and see him?" It was the shrewdness of the insinuation which made the story be circulated.

a proof that he was no very witty man. He was an instance of the truth of the observation, that a man will please more upon the whole by negative qualities than by positive ; by never offending, than by giving a great deal of delight. In the first place, men hate more steadily than they love ; and if I have said something to hurt a man once, I shall not get the better of this by saying many things to please him."

Tuesday, September 16, Dr. Johnson having mentioned to me the extraordinary size and price of some cattle reared by Dr. Taylor, I rode out with our host, surveyed his farm, and was shown one cow which he had sold for a hundred and twenty guineas, and another for which he had been offered a hundred and thirty. Taylor thus described to me his old schoolfellow and friend, Johnson : "He is a man of a very clear head, great power of words, and a very gay imagination ; but there is no disputing with him. He will not hear you, and, having a louder voice than you, must roar you down."

In the afternoon I tried to get Dr. Johnson to like the Poems of Mr. Hamilton of Bongour, which I had brought with me : I had been much pleased with them at a very early age : the impression still remained on my mind ; it was confirmed by the opinion of my friend the Hon. Andrew Erskine, himself both a good poet and a good critic, who thought Hamilton as true a poet as ever wrote, and that his not having fame was unaccountable. Johnson, upon repeated occasions, while I was at Ashbourne, talked slightly of Hamilton. He said there was no power of thinking in his verses, nothing that strikes one, nothing better than what you generally find in magazines ; and that the highest praise they deserved was, that they were very well for a gentleman to hand about among his friends. He said the imitation of *Ne sit ancillæ tibi amor*, &c. was too solemn : he read part of it at the beginning. He read the beautiful pathetic song "Ah, the poor sheperd's mournful fate," and did not seem to give attention to what I had been used to think tender elegant strains, but laughed at the rhyme, in Scotch pronunciation, *wishes* and *blushes*, reading *wushes* —and there he stopped. He owned that the epitaph on Lord Newhall was pretty well done. He read the "Inscription in a Summer-house," and a little of the Imitations of Horace's Epistles ; but said he found nothing to make him desire to

read on. When I urged that there were some good poetical passages in the book, "Where," said he, "will you find so large a collection without some?" I thought the description of Winter might obtain his approbation :

"See Winter, from the frozen north,
Drives his iron chariot forth !
His grisly hand in icy chains
Fair Tweeda's silver flood constrains," &c.

He asked why an "*iron chariot*?" and said "*icy chains*" was an old image. I was struck with the uncertainty of taste, and somewhat sorry that a poet whom I had long read with fondness was not approved by Dr. Johnson. I comforted myself with thinking that the beauties were too delicate for his robust perceptions. Garrick maintained that he had not a taste for the finest productions of genius : but I was sensible, that when he took the trouble to analyse critically, he generally convinced us that he was right.

In the evening the Rev. Mr. Seward, of Lichfield, who was passing through Ashburne in his way home, drank tea with us. Johnson described him thus : "Sir, his ambition is to be a fine talker ; so he goes to Buxton and such places, where he may find companies to listen to him. And, Sir, he is a valetudinarian, one of those who are always mending themselves. I do not know a more disagreeable character than a valetudinarian, who thinks he may do any thing that is for his ease [see p. 220] and indulges himself in the grossest freedoms : Sir, he brings himself to the state of a hog in a sty."

Dr. Taylor's nose happening to bleed, he said it was because he had omitted to have himself blooded four days after a quarter of a year's interval. Dr. Johnson, who was a great dabbler in physic, disapproved much of periodical bleeding. "For," said he, "you accustom yourself to an evacuation which nature cannot perform of herself, and therefore she cannot help you, should you from forgetfulness or any other cause omit it ; so you may be suddenly suffocated. You may accustom yourself to other periodical evacuations, because, should you omit them, nature can supply the omission ; but nature cannot open a vein to blood you."¹ "I do not like to

¹ Nature, however, may supply the evacuation by an hemorrhage.—KEARNEY.

take an emetic," said Taylor, "for fear of breaking some small vessels" "Poh!" said Johnson, "if you have so many things that will break, you had better break your neck at once, and there's an end on't. You will break no small vessels" (blowing with high derision).

I mentioned to Dr. Johnson, that David Hume's persisting in his infidelity when he was dying shocked me much. JOHNSON. "Why should it shock you, Sir? Hume owned he had never read the New Testament with attention. Here then was a man who had been at no pains to inquire into the truth of religion, and had continually turned his mind the other way. It was not to be expected that the prospect of death would alter his way of thinking, unless God should send an angel to set him right." I said I had reason to believe that the thought of annihilation gave Hume no pain. JOHNSON. "It was not so, Sir. He had a vanity in being thought easy. It is more probable that he should assume an appearance of ease, than that so very improbable a thing should be, as a man not afraid of going (as, in spite of his delusive theory, he cannot be sure but he may go) into an unknown state, and being uneasy at leaving all he knew. And you are to consider, that upon his own principle of annihilation he had no motive to speak the truth." The horror of death, which I had always observed in Dr. Johnson, appeared strong to-night. I ventured to tell him, that I had been, for moments in my life, not afraid of death; therefore I could suppose another man in that state of mind for a considerable space of time. He said, "he never had moment in which death was not terrible to him. He added, that it had been observed, that scarce any man dies in public but with apparent resolution; from that desire of praise which never quits us. I said, Dr. Dodd seemed to be willing to die, and full of hopes of happiness. "Sir," said he, "Dr. Dodd would have given both his hands and both his legs to have lived. The better a man is, the more afraid is he of death, having a clearer view of infinite purity." He owned, that our being in an unhappy uncertainty as to our salvation was mysterious; and said, "Ah! we must wait till we are in another state of being to have many things explained to us" Even the powerful mind of Johnson seemed foiled by futurity. But I thought that the gloom of uncertainty in solemn religious speculation, being mingled with hope, was yet more conso-

thing of the slight foundation of the hereditary right of the house of Stuart. "Sir," said Johnson, "the house of Stuart succeeded to the full right of both the houses of York and Lancaster, whose common source had the undisputed right. A right to a throne is like a right to anything else. Possession is sufficient, where no better right can be shown. This was the case with the Royal Family of England, as it is now with the King of France : for as to be the first beginning of the right we are in the dark."

Thursday Sept. 18.—Last night Dr. Johnson had proposed that the crystal lustre, or chandelier, in Dr. Taylor's large room, should be lighted up some time or other. Taylor said it should be lighted up next night. "That will do very well," said I, "for it is Johnson's birthday." When we were in the Isle of Sky, Johnson had desired me not to mention his birthday. He did not seem pleased at this time that I mentioned it, and said (somewhat sternly,) "he would not have the lustre lighted the next day."

Some ladies, who had been present yesterday when I mentioned his birthday, came to dinner to-day, and plagued him unintentionally, by wishing him joy. I know not why he disliked having his birthday mentioned, unless it were that it reminded him of his approaching nearer to death, of which he had a constant dread.¹

I mentioned to him a friend of mine who was formerly gloomy from low spirits, and much distressed by the fear of death, but was now uniformly placid, and contemplated his dissolution without any perturbation. "Sir," said Johnson, "this is only a disordered imagination taking a different turn."

We talked of a collection being made of all the English poets who had published a volume of poems. Johnson told me, "that a

¹ His letter of this date to Mrs. Thrale confirms this conjecture :—"Ashbourne, Sept. 18, 1777.—Here is another birthday. They come very fast. I am now sixty-eight. To lament the past is vain; what remains is to look for hope in futurity. Boswell is with us in good humour, and plays his part with his usual vivacity. We are to go in the doctor's vehicle, and dine at Derby to-morrow. Do you know anything of Bolt Court? Invite Mr. Levet to dinner, and make inquiry what family he has, and how they proceed. I had a letter lately from Mrs. Williams; Dr. Lewis visits her, and has added ipecacuanha to her bark: but I do not hear much of her amendment. Age is a very stubborn disease. Yet Levet sleeps sound every night. I am sorry for poor Seward's pain, but he may live to be better. Mr. [Middleton's] erection of an urn [see *antiq.*, p. 64], looks like an intention to bury me alive: I would as willingly see my friend, however benevolent and hospitable, quietly inurned. Let him think for the present of some more acceptable memorial."

Mr. Coxeter, whom he knew, had gone the greatest length towards this : having collected, I think, about five hundred volumes of poets whose works were little known ; but that upon his death Tom Osbourne bought them, and they were dispersed, which he thought a pity, as it was curious to see any series complete ; and in every volume of poems something good may be found."

He observed, that a gentleman of eminence in literature had got into a bad style of poetry of late. "He puts," said he, "a very common thing in a strange dress, till he does not know it himself, and thinks other people do not know it." BOSWELL. "That is owing to his being so much versant in old English poetry." JOHNSON. "What is that to the purpose, Sir ? If I say a man is drunk, and you tell me it is owing to his taking much drink, the matter is not mended. No, Sir ———¹ has taken to an odd mode. For example, he'd write thus :

'Hermit hoar, in solemn cell,
Wearing out life's evening gray.'

Gray evening is common enough ; but *evening gray* he'd think fine.—Stay :—we'll make out the stanza :

'Hermit hoar in solemn cell,
Wearing out life's evening gray :
Smite thy bosom, sage, and tell,
What is bliss ? and which the way ?'"

BOSWELL. "But why smite his bosom, Sir ?" JOHNSON. "Why to show he was in earnest" (smiling.) He at an after period added the following stanza :—

"Thus I spoke ; and speaking sigh'd ;
—Scarce repress'd the starting tear ;—
When the smiling sage replied —
—Come, my lad, and drink some beer."²

¹ This has been generally supposed to have been Dr. Percy, but Thomas Warton is meant, and the parodies were intended to ridicule the style of his poems published in 1777. The first lines of two of his best known odes are marked with that kind of *inversion* which Johnson laughed at—"Evening spreads his *mantle hoar*," and "Beneath the beech whose *branches bare*." But there is no other point of resemblance that I can discover.—C.

² As some of my readers may be gratified by reading the progress of this little composition, I shall insert it from my notes. "When Dr. Johnson and I were sitting *tête-à-tête* at the

I cannot help thinking the first stanza very good solemn poetry, as also the first three lines of the second. Its last line is an excellent burlesque surprise on gloomy sentimental inquiries. And, perhaps, the advice is as good as can be given to a low-spirited dissatisfied being :—"Don't trouble your head with sickly thinking: take a cup and be merry."

Friday, September 19, after breakfast, Dr. Johnson and I set out in Dr. Taylor's chaise to go to Derby. The day was fine, and we resolved to go by Keddlestone, the seat of Lord Scarsdale, that I might see his lordship's fine house. I was struck with the magnificence of the building; and the extensive park, with the finest verdure, covered with deer, and cattle, and sheep delighted me. The number of old oaks, of an immense size, filled me with a sort of respectful admiration; for one of them sixty pounds was offered. The excellent smooth gravel roads; the large piece of water formed by his lordship from some small brooks, with a handsome barge upon it; the venerable Gothic church, now the family chapel, just by the house; in short, the grand group of objects agitated and distended my mind in a most agreeable manner. "One should think," said I, "that the proprietor of all this must be happy." "Nay, Sir," said Johnson, "all this excludes but one evil—poverty."¹

Our names were sent up, and a well-drest elderly housekeeper, a most distinct articulator, showed us the house; which I need not

Mitre tavern, May 9, 1778, he said, '*Where is bliss,*' would be better. He then added a ludicrous stanza, but would not repeat it, lest I should take it down. It was somewhat as follows: the last line I am sure I remember:—

' While I thus	cried,
	seer,
The hoary	replied,
Come, my lad, and drink some beer.'	

In spring, 1779, when in better humour, he made the second stanza, as in the text. There was only one variation afterwards made on my suggestion, which was changing *hoary* in the third line to *smiling*, both to avoid a sameness with the epithet in the first line, and to describe the hermit in his pleasantry. He was then very well pleased that I should preserve it."

¹ When I mentioned Dr. Johnson's remark to a lady of admirable good sense and quickness of understanding, she observed, "It is true all this excludes only one evil; but how much good does it let in!"—*First edition.* To this observation much praise has been justly given. Let me then now do myself the honour to mention, that the lady who made it was the late Margaret Montgomerie, my very valuable wife, and the very affectionate mother of my children, who, if they inherit her good qualities, will have no reason to complain of their lot. *Dos magna parentum virtus.*—*Second edition.*

describe, as there is an account of it published in "Adams's Works in Architecture." Dr. Johnson thought better of it to-day, than when he saw it before ; for he had lately attacked it violently, saying, " It would do excellently for a town-hall. The large room with the pillars," said he, " would do for the judges to sit in at the assizes ; the circular room for a jury-chamber ; and the room above for prisoners." Still he thought the large room ill lighted, and of no use but for dancing in ; and the bedchambers but indifferent rooms ; and that the immense sum which it cost was injudiciously laid out. Dr. Taylor had put him in mind of his *appearing* pleased with the house, " But," said he, " that was when Lord Scarsdale was present. Politeness obliges us to appear pleased with a man's works when he is present. No man will be so ill-bred as to question you. You may therefore pay compliments without saying what is not true. I should say to Lord Scarsdale of his large room, ' My lord, this is the most *costly* room that I ever saw ;' which is true."

Dr. Manningham, physician in London, who was visiting at Lord Scarsdale's, accompanied us through many of the rooms ; and soon afterwards my lord himself, to whom Dr. Johnson was known, appeared, and did the honours of the house. We talked of Mr. Langton. Johnson, with a warm vehemence of affectionate regard, exclaimed, " The earth does not bear a worthier man than Bennet Langton." We saw a good many fine pictures, which I think are described in one of " Young's Tours." There is a printed catalogue of them, which the housekeeper put into my hand. I should like to view them at leisure. I was much struck with Daniel interpreting Nebuchadnezzar's dream, by Rembrandt. We were shown a pretty large library. In his lordship's dressing-room lay Johnson's small dictionary : he showed it to me, with some eagerness, saying, " Look ye ! *Quæ regio in terris nostri non plena laboris.*" He observed, also, Goldsmith's " Animated Nature," and said, " Here's our friend ! The poor doctor would have been happy to hear of this."

In our way, Johnson strongly expressed his love of driving fast in a post-chaise. " If," said he, " I had no duties, and no reference to futurity, I would spend my life in driving briskly in a post-chaise with a pretty woman ; but she should be one who could understand

me, and would add something to the conversation." I observed, that we were this day to stop just where the Highland army did in 1745. JOHNSON. "It was a noble attempt." BOSWELL. "I wish we could have an authentic history of it." JOHNSON. "If you were not an idle dog you might write it, by collecting from everybody what they can tell, and putting down your authorities." BOSWELL. "But I could not have the advantage of it in my life-time." JOHNSON. "You might have the satisfaction of its fame, by printing it in Holland; and as to profit, consider how long it was before writing came to be considered in a pecuniary view. Baretti says, he is the first man that ever received copy-money in Italy. I said that I would endeavour to do what Dr. Johnson suggested; and I thought that I might write so as to venture to publish my "History of the Civil War in Great Britain in 1745 and 1746" without being obliged to go to a foreign press.¹

When we arrived at Derby, Dr. Butter accompanied us to see the manufactory of china there. I admired the ingenuity and delicate art with which a man fashioned clay into a cup, a saucer, or a teapot, while a boy turned round a wheel to give the mass rotundity. I thought this as excellent in its species of power, as making good verses in its species. Yet I had no respect for this potter. Neither, indeed, has a man of any extent of thinking for a mere verse-maker, in whose numbers, however perfect, there is no poetry, no mind. The china was beautiful, but Dr. Johnson justly observed it was too dear; for that he could have vessels of silver, of the same size, as cheap as what were here made of porcelain.

I felt a pleasure in walking about Derby, such as I always have in walking about any town to which I am not accustomed. There is an immediate sensation of novelty; and one speculates on the way in which life is passed in it, which, although there is a sameness everywhere upon the whole, is yet minutely diversified. The minute diversities in everything are wonderful. Talking of shaving the other night at Dr. Taylor's, Dr. Johnson said, "Sir, of a thousand

¹ I am now happy to understand that Mr. John Home, who was himself gallantly in the field for the reigning family in that interesting warfare, but is generous enough to do justice to the other side, is preparing an account of it for the press.—B. It appeared, in one vol. 4to., in 1802.

shavers, two do not shave so much alike as not to be distinguished." I thought this not possible, till he specified so many of the varieties in shaving ;—holding the razor more or less perpendicular ; drawing long or short strokes ; beginning at the upper part of the face, or the under—at the right side or the left side. Indeed, when one considers what variety of sounds can be uttered by the windpipe, in the compass of a very small aperture, we may be convinced how many degrees of difference there may be in the application of a razor.

We dined with Dr. Butter,¹ whose lady is daughter of my cousin Sir John Douglas, whose grandson is now presumptive heir of the noble family of Queensberry. Johnson and he had a good deal of medical conversation. Johnson said he had somewhere or other given an account of Dr. Nichols's discourse "*De Animâ Medicâ*." He told us, "that whatever a man's distemper was, Dr. Nichols would not attend² him as a physician, if his mind was not at ease ; for he believed that no medicines would have any influence. He once attended a man in trade, upon whom he found none of the medicines he prescribed had any effect ; he asked the man's wife privately whether his affairs were not in a bad way ? She said no. He continued his attendance some time, still without success. At length the man's wife told him she had discovered that her husband's affairs *were* in a bad way. When Goldsmith was dying, Dr. Turton said to him, 'Your pulse is in greater disorder than it should be, from the degree of fever which you have : is your mind at ease ?' Goldsmith answered it was not."

After dinner, Mrs. Butter went with me to see the silk-mill which Mr. John Lombe had³ had a patent for, having brought away the contrivance from Italy. I am not very conversant with mechanics ; but the simplicity of this machine, and its multiplied operations, struck me with an agreeable surprise. I had learnt from Dr. John-

¹ Dr. Butter was at this time a practising physician at Derby. He afterwards removed to London, where he died, March 22, 1805. He is author of several medical tracts.—M.

² Dr. Nichols's opinion had made a strong impression on Johnson's mind, and appears to have been the cause of his urging Mrs. Aston and his other correspondents to keep their minds as much as possible at ease.—HALL.

³ See Hutton's "History of Derby," a book which is deservedly esteemed for its information, accuracy and good narrative. Indeed, the age in which we live is eminently distinguished by topographical excellence.

son, during this interview, not to think with a dejected indifference of the works of art, and the pleasures of life, because life is uncertain and short ; but to consider such indifference as a failure of reason, a morbidness of mind ; for happiness should be cultivated as much as we can, and the objects which are instrumental to it should be steadily considered as of importance with a reference not only to ourselves, but to multitudes in successive ages. Though it is proper to value small parts, as

“Sands make the mountain, moments make the year ;”—YOUNG.

yet we must contemplate, collectively, to have a just estimation of objects. One moment's being uneasy or not, seems of no consequence ; yet this may be thought of the next, and the next, and so on, till there is a large portion of misery. In the same way one must think of happiness, of learning, of friendship. We cannot tell the precise moment when friendship is formed. As in filling a vessel drop by drop, there is at last a drop which makes it run over ; so in a series of kindnesses there is at last one which makes the heart run over. We must not divide the objects of our attention into minute parts, and think separately of each part. It is by contemplating a large mass of human existence, that a man, while he sets a just value on his own life, does not think of his death as annihilating all that is great and pleasing in the world, as if actually *contained in his mind*, according to Berkeley's reverie. If his imagination be not sickly and feeble, it “wings its distant way” far beyond himself, and views the world in unceasing activity of every sort. It must be acknowledged, however, that Pope's plaintive reflection, that all things would be as gay as ever, on the day of his death, is natural and common. We are apt to transfer to all around us our own gloom, without considering that at any given point of time there is, perhaps, as much youth and gaiety in the world as at another. Before I came into this life, in which I have had so many pleasant scenes, have not thousands and ten thousands of deaths and funerals happened, and have not families been in grief for their nearest relations ? But have those dismal circumstances at all affected *me* ? Why, then, should the gloomy scenes which I experience, or which I know, affect others ? Let us guard against

imagining that there is an end of felicity upon earth, when we ourselves grow old, or are unhappy.

Dr. Johnson told us at tea, that when some of Dr. Dodd's pious friends were trying to console him by saying that he was going to leave a "wretched world," he had honesty enough not to join in the cant:—"No, no," said he, "it has been a very agreeable world to me." Johnson added, "I respect Dodd for thus speaking the truth; for, to be sure, he had for several years enjoyed a life of great voluptuousness."

He told us that Dodd's city friends stood by him so, that a thousand pounds were ready to be given to the gaoler, if he would let him escape. He added, that he knew a friend of Dodd's who walked about Newgate for some time on the evening before the day of his execution, with five hundred pounds in his pocket, ready to be paid to any of the turnkeys who could get him out, but it was too late; for he was watched with much circumspection. He said, Dodd's friends had an image of him made of wax, which was to have been left in his place; and he believed it was carried into the prison.¹

Johnson disapproved of Dr. Dodd's leaving the world persuaded that "The Convict's Address to his unhappy Brethren" was of his own writing. "But, Sir," said I, "you contributed to the deception; for when Mr. Seward expressed a doubt to you that it was not Dodd's own, because it had a great deal more force of mind in it than anything known to be his, you answered,—'Why should you think so? Depend upon it, Sir, when any man knows he is to be hanged in a fortnight, it concentrates his mind wonderfully.'"
JOHNSON. "Sir, as Dodd got it from me to pass as his own, while that could do him any good, that was an *implied promise* that I should not own it. To own it, therefore, would have been telling a

¹ Dr. Johnson told me that Dodd probably entertained some hopes of life even to the last moment, having been flattered by some of his medical friends that there was a chance of suspending its total extinction till he was cut down, by placing the knot of the rope in a particular manner behind his ear. That then he was to be carried to a convenient place, where they would use their utmost endeavour to recover him. All this was done. The hangman observed their injunctions in fixing the rope, and as the cart drew off, said in Dodd's ear, you must not move an inch! But he struggled. Being carried to the place appointed, his friends endeavoured to restore him by bathing his breast with warm water, which Dr. Johnson said was not so likely to have that effect as cold water.—REYNOLDS, *Recoll.*

lie, with the addition of breach of promise, which was worse than simply telling a lie to make it be believed it was Dodd's. Besides, Sir, I did not *directly* tell a lie : I left the matter uncertain. Perhaps I thought that Seward would not believe it the less to be mine for what I said; but I would not put it in his power to say I had owned it."

He praised Blair's Sermons : " Yet," said he (willing to let us see he was aware that fashionable fame, however deserved, is not always the most lasting), " perhaps they may not be reprinted after seven years ; at least not after Blair's death."

He said, " Goldsmith was a plant that flowered late. There appeared nothing remarkable about him when he was young ; though when he had got high in fame, one of his friends¹ began to recollect something of his being distinguished at college.² Goldsmith in the same manner recollected more of that friend's early years, as he grew a greater man."

I mentioned that Lord Monboddo told me, he awaked every morning at four, and then for his health got up and walked in his room naked, with the window open, which he called taking *an air bath* ; after which he went to bed again, and slept two hours more. Johnson, who was always ready to beat down anything that seemed to be exhibited with disproportionate importance, thus observed : " I suppose, Sir, there is no more in it than this ; he wakes at four, and cannot sleep till he chills himself, and makes the warmth of the bed a grateful sensation."

I talked of the difficulty of rising in the morning. Dr. Johnson told me, " that the learned Mrs. Carter, at that period when she was eager in study, did not awake as early as she wished, and she therefore had a contrivance, that, at a certain hour, her chamberlight should burn a string to which a heavy weight was suspended, which then fell with a strong sudden noise : this roused her from sleep, and then she had no difficulty in getting up." But I said *that* was my difficulty ; and wished there could be some medicine invented which would make one rise without pain, which I never did, unless

¹ Mr. Burke.—C.

² He *was* distinguished in college, as appears from a circumstance mentioned by Dr. Kearney. See Vol. I. p. 329.—M.

after lying in bed a very long time. Perhaps there may be something in the stores of Nature which could do this. I have thought of a pulley to raise me gradually ; but that would give me pain, as it would counteract my internal inclination. I would have something that can dissipate the *vis inertiae*, and give elasticity to the muscles. As I imagine that the human body may be put, by the operation of other substances, into any state in which it has ever been ; and as I have experienced a state in which rising from bed was not disagreeable, but easy, nay, sometimes agreeable ; I suppose that this state may be produced, if we knew by what. We can heat the body, we can cool it ; we can give it tension or relaxation ; and surely it is possible to bring it into a state in which rising from bed will not be a pain.

Johnson observed, that “a man should take a sufficient quantity of sleep, which Dr. Mead says is between seven and nine hours.” I told him, that Dr. Cullen said to me, that a man should not take more sleep than he can take at once. JOHNSON. “This rule, Sir, cannot hold in all cases ; for many people have their sleep broken by sickness ; and surely, Cullen would not have a man to get up, after having slept but an hour. Such a regimen would soon end in a *long sleep*.”² Dr. Taylor remarked, I think very justly, that “a man who does not feel an inclination to sleep at the ordinary times, instead of being stronger than other people, must not be well ; for a man in health has all the natural inclinations to eat, drink, and sleep, in a strong degree.”

Johnson advised me to-night not to *refine* in the education of my children. “Life,” said he, “will not bear refinement : you must do as other people do.”

As we drove back to Ashbourne, Dr. Johnson recommended to

This regimen was, however, practised by Bishop Ken, of whom Hawkins (*not Sir John*), in his life of that venerable prelate, p. 4, tells us, “And that neither his study might be the aggressor on his hours of instruction, or what he judged his duty, prevent his improvements ; nor both, his closet addresses to his God ; he strictly accustomed himself to but one sleep, which often obliged him to rise at one or two of the clock in the morning, and sometimes sooner ; and grew so habitual, that it continued with him almost till his last illness. And so lively and cheerful was his temper, that he could be very facetious and entertaining to his friends in the evening, even when he was perceived that with difficulty he kept his eyes open ; and then seemed to go to rest with no other purpose than the refreshing and enabling him with more vigour and cheerfulness to sing his morning hymn, as he then used to do to his late before he put on his clothes.”

me, as he had often done, to drink water only : "For," said he, "you are then sure not to get drunk ; whereas, if you drink wine, you are never sure." I said, drinking wine was a pleasure which I was unwilling to give up. "Why, Sir," said he, "there is no doubt that not to drink wine is a great deduction from life : but it may be necessary." He however owned, that in his opinion a free use of wine did not shorten life; and said, he would not give less for the life of a certain Scotch Lord (whom he named), celebrated for hard drinking, than for that of a sober man. "But stay," said he, with his usual intelligence and accuracy of inquiry—"does it take much wine to make him drunk?" I answered, "a great deal either of wine or strong punch."—"Then" said he, "that is the worse." I presume to illustrate my friend's observation thus : "A fortress which soon surrenders has its walls less shattered than when a long and obstinate resistance was made."

I ventured to mention a person who was as violent a Scotchman as he was an Englishman ; and literally had the same contempt for an Englishman compared with a Scotchman, that he had for a Scotchman compared with an Englishman ; and that he would say of Dr. Johnson, "Damned rascal ! to talk as he does of the Scotch." This seemed, for a moment, "to give him pause." It, perhaps, presented his extreme prejudice against the Scotch in a point of view somewhat new to him by the effect of *contrast*.

By the time when we returned to Ashbourne, Dr. Taylor was gone to bed. Johnson and I sat up a long time by ourselves.

He was much diverted with an article which I showed him in the "Critical Review" of this year, giving an account of a curious publication, entitled "A Spiritual Diary and Soliloquies, by John Ruttty, M. D." Dr. Ruttty was one of the people called quakers, a physician of some eminence in Dublin, and author of several works. This Diary, which was kept from 1753 to 1775, the year in which he died, and was now published in two volumes octavo, exhibited, in the simplicity of his heart, a minute and honest register of the state of his mind ; which, though frequently laughable enough, was not more so than the history of many men would be, if recorded with equal fairness. The following specimens were extracted by the reviewers :—

"Tenth month, 1753, 23.—Indulgence in bed an hour too long.

"Twelfth month, 17.—An hypochondriac obnubilation from wind and indigestion.

"Ninth month, 28.—An over-dose of whisky!

"29.—A dull, cross, choleric day.

"First month, 1757, 22.—A little swinish at dinner and repast. Dogged on provocation.

"Second month, 5.—Very dogged or snappish.

"14.—Snappish on fasting.

"26.—Cursed snappishness to those under me, on a bodily indisposition.

"Third month, 11.—On a provocation, exercised a dumb resentment for two days, instead of scolding.

"22.—Scolded too vehemently.

"23.—Dogged again.

"Fourth month, 29.—Mechanically and sinfully dogged."

Johnson laughed heartily at this good Quietist's self-condemning minutes; particularly at his mentioning, with such a serious regret, occasional instances of "*swinishness* in eating, and *doggedness of temper*." He thought the observations of the Critical Reviewers upon the importance of a man to himself so ingenious and so well expressed, that I shall here introduce them. After observing, that "there are few writers who have gained any reputation by recording their own actions," they say,—

"We may reduce the egotists to four classes. In the *first* we have Julius Cæsar: he relates his own transactions; but he relates them with peculiar grace and dignity, and his narrative is supported by the greatness of his character and achievements. In the *second* class we have Marcus Antoninus: this writer has given us a series of reflections on his own life; but his sentiments are so noble, his morality so sublime, that his meditations are universally admired. In the *third* class we have some others of tolerable credit, who have given importance to their own private history by an intermixture of literary anecdotes, and the occurrences of their own times: the celebrated *Huetius*¹ has published an entertaining volume upon this plan, '*De Rebus ad eum pertinentibus*.' In the *fourth* class we have the journalists, temporal and spiritual: Elias Ashmole, William Lilly, George Whitefield, John Wesley, and a thousand other old women and fanatic writers of memoirs and meditations."

I mentioned to him that Dr. Hugh Blair, in his Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres, which I heard him deliver at Edinburgh,

¹ Huet, Bishop of Avranches.—C.

had animadverted on the Johnsonian style as too pompous : and attempted to imitate it, by giving a sentence of Addison in "The Spectator," No. 411, in the manner of Johnson. When treating of the utility of the pleasures of imagination in preserving us from vice, it is observed of those "who know not how to be idle and innocent," that "their very first step out of business is into vice or folly ;" which Dr. Blair supposed would have been expressed in "The Rambler" thus : "their very first step out of the regions of business is into the perturbation of vice, or the vacuity of folly." ¹ JOHNSON. "Sir, these are not the words I should have used. No, Sir ; the imitators of my style have not hit it. Miss Aikin has done it the best ; for she has imitated the sentiment as well as the diction."

I intend, before this work is concluded, to exhibit specimens of imitation of my friend's style in various modes ; some caricaturing or mimicking it, and some formed upon it, whether intentionally, or with a degree of similarity to it, of which, perhaps, the writers were not conscious.

In Baretti's Review, which he published in Italy, under the title of "*FRUSTA LETTERARIA*," it is observed, that Dr. Robertson the historian had formed his style upon that of "*Il celebre Samuele Johnson*." My friend himself was of that opinion ; for he once said to me in a pleasant humour, "Sir, if Robertson's style be faulty, he owes it to me ; that is, having too many words, and those too big ones."

I read to him a letter which Lord Monboddo had written to me, containing some critical remarks upon the style of his "Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland." His lordship praised the very fine passage upon landing at Icolmkil : but his own style being exceedingly dry and hard, he disapproved of the richness of Johnson's language, and of his frequent use of metaphorical expressions. JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, this criticism would be just, if, in my style, superfluous words, or words too big for the thoughts, could be pointed out ; but this I do not believe can be done. For instance, in the passage which

¹ When Dr. Blair published his "Lectures," he was invidiously attacked for having omitted his censure on Johnson's style, and, on the contrary, praising it highly. But before that time, Johnson's "Lives of the Poets" had appeared, in which his style was considerably easier than when he wrote "The Rambler." It would, therefore, have been uncandid in Blair, even supposing his criticism to have been just, to have preserved it.

Lord Monboddo admires, 'We were now treading that illustrious region,' the word *illustrious* contributes nothing to the mere narration; for the fact might be told without it: but it is not, therefore, superfluous; for it wakes the mind to peculiar attention, where something of more than usual importance is to be presented. 'Illustrious!'—for what? and then the sentence proceeds to expand the circumstances connected with Iona. And, Sir, as to metaphorical expression, that is a great excellence in style, when it is used with propriety, for it gives you two ideas for one;—conveys the meaning more luminously, and generally with a perception of delight."

He told me, that he had been asked to undertake the new edition of the "Biographia Britannica," but had declined it; which he afterwards said to me he regretted. In this regret many will join, because it would have procured us more of Johnson's most delightful species of writing; and although my friend Dr. Kippis¹ has hitherto discharged the task judiciously, distinctly, and with more impartiality than might have been expected from a separatist, it were to have been wished that the superintendence of this literary Temple of Fame had been assigned to "a friend to the constitution in church and state." We should not then have had it too much crowded with obscure dissenting teachers, doubtless men of merit and worth, but not quite to be numbered amongst "the most eminent persons who have flourished in Great Britain and Ireland."²

¹ After having given to the public the first five volumes (folio) of a new edition of the *BIOGRAPHIA BRITANNICA*, between the years 1778 and 1793, Dr. Kippis died, Oct. 8, 1795; and the work is not likely to be soon completed.—M.

² In this censure, which has been carelessly uttered, I carelessly joined. But in justice to Dr. Kippis, who, with that manly, candid, good temper which marks his character, set me right, I now with pleasure retract it; and I desire it may be particularly observed, as pointed out by him to me, that "The new lives of dissenting divines, in the first four volumes of the second edition of the '*Biographia Britannica*' are those of John Abernethy, Thomas Amory, George Benson, Hugh Broughton, the learned puritan, Simon Browne, Joseph Boyse, of Dublin, Thomas Cartwright, the learned puritan, and Samuel Chandler. The only doubt I have ever heard suggested is, whether there should have been an article of Dr. Amory. But I was convinced, and am still convinced, that he was entitled to one, from the reality of his learning, and the excellent and candid nature of his practical writings. The new lives of clergymen of the church of England, in the same four volumes, are as follows: John Balguy, Edward Bentham, George Berkley, Bishop of Cloyne, William Berriman, Thomas Birch, William Borlase, Thomas Bott, James Bradley, Thomas Broughton, John Browne, John Burton, Joseph Butler, Bishop of Durham, Thomas Carte, Edmund Castell, Edmund Chishull, Charles Churchill, William Clarke, Robert Clayton, Bishop of Clogher, John Conybeare, Bishop of Bristol, George Castard, and Samuel Croxall. 'I am not conscious,' says Dr

On Saturday, September 20 ; after breakfast, when Taylor was gone out to his farm, Dr. Johnson and I had a serious conversation by ourselves on melancholy and madness ; which he was, I always thought, erroneously inclined to confound together. Melancholy, like "great wit," may be "near allied to madness ;" but there is, in my opinion, a distinct separation between them. When he talked of madness, he was to be understood as speaking of those who were in any great degree disturbed, or, as it is commonly expressed, "troubled in mind." Some of the ancient philosophers held, that all deviations from right reason were madness ; and whoever wishes to see the opinions both of ancients and moderns upon this subject, collected and illustrated with a variety of curious facts, may read Dr. Arnold's very entertaining work.¹

Johnson said, "A madman loves to be with people whom he fears ; not as a dog fears the lash, but of whom he stands in awe." I was struck with the justice of this observation. To be with those of whom a person, whose mind is wavering and dejected, stands in awe, represses and composes an uneasy tumult of spirits,² and consoles him with the contemplation of something steady, and at least comparatively great.

He added, "Madmen are all sensual in the lower stages of the distemper. They are eager for gratifications to soothe their minds, and divert their attention from the misery which they suffer ; but when they grow very ill, pleasure is too weak for them, and they seek for pain."³ Employment, Sir, and hardships, prevent melan-

Kippis, 'of any partiality in conducting the work. I would not willingly insert a dissenting minister that does not justly deserve to be noticed, or omit an established clergyman that does. At the same time, I shall not be deterred from introducing dissenters into the Biographia, when I am satisfied that they are entitled to that distinction, from their writings, learning, and merit.'" Let me add that the expression "A friend to the constitution in church and state," was not meant by me as any reflection upon this reverend gentleman, as if he were an enemy to the political constitution of his country, as established at the Revolution, but, from my steady and avowed predilection for a *Tory*, was quoted from "Johnson's Dictionary," where that distinction is so defined.

¹ "Observations on Insanity," by Thomas Arnold, M.D. London, 1782.

² Cardan composed his mind tending to madness (or rather actually mad, for such he seems in his writings, learned as they are), by exciting voluntary pain. V. Card. Op. et Vit. —KEARNEY.

³ We read in the Gospels, that those unfortunate persons, who were possessed with evil spirits (which, after all, I think is the most probable cause of madness, as was first suggested to me by my respectable friend Sir John Pringle), had recourse to pain, tearing themselves,

choly. I suppose, in all our army in America, there was not one man who went mad."

We entered seriously upon a question of much importance to me, which Johnson was pleased to consider with friendly attention. I had long complained to him that I felt myself discontented in Scotland, as too narrow a sphere, and that I wished to make my chief residence in London, the great scene of ambition, instruction, and amusement; a scene which was to me, comparatively speaking, a heaven upon earth. JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, I never knew any one who had such a *gust* for London as you have: and I cannot blame you for your wish to live there; yet, Sir, were I in your father's place, I should not consent to your settling there; for I have the old feudal notions, and I should be afraid that Auchinleck would be deserted, as you would soon find it more desirable to have a country seat in a better climate. I own, however, that to consider it as a *duty* to reside on a family estate is prejudice; for we must consider, that working-people get employment equally, and the produce of land is sold equally, whether a great family resides at home or not; and if the rents of an estate be carried to London, they return again in the circulation of commerce; nay, Sir, we must perhaps allow, that carrying the rents to a distance is a good, because it contributes to that circulation. We must, however, allow, that a well-regulated great family may improve a neighbourhood in civility and elegance, and give an example of good order, virtue, and piety; and so its residence at home may be of much advantage. But if a great family be disorderly and vicious, its residence at home is very pernicious to a neighbourhood. There is not now the same inducement to live in the country as formerly; the pleasures of social life are much better enjoyed in town, and there is no longer in the country that power and influence in proprietors of land which they had

and jumping sometimes into the fire, sometimes into the water. Mr. Seward has furnished me with a remarkable anecdote in confirmation of Dr. Johnson's observation. A tradesman, who had acquired a large fortune in London, retired from business, and went to live at Worcester. His mind, being without its usual occupation, and having nothing else to supply its place, preyed upon itself, so that existence was a torment to him. At last he was seized with the stone; and a friend who found him in one of its severest fits, having expressed his concern, "No, no, Sir," said he, "don't pity me; what I now feel is ease, compared with that torture of mind from which it relieves me."

in old times, and which made the country so agreeable to them. The Laird of Auchinleck now is not near so great a man as the Laird of Auchinleck was a hundred years ago."

I told him that one of my ancestors never went from home without being attended by thirty men on horseback. Johnson's shrewdness and spirit of inquiry were exerted upon every occasion. "Pray," said he, "how did your ancestor support his thirty men and thirty horses when he went at a distance from home, in an age when there was hardly any money in circulation?" I suggested the same difficulty to a friend who mentioned Douglas's going to the Holy Land with a numerous train of followers.¹ Douglas could, no doubt maintain followers enough while living upon his own lands, the produce of which supplied them with food; but he could not carry that food to the Holy Land; and as there was no commerce by which he could be supplied with money, how could he maintain them in foreign countries?

I suggested a doubt, that if I were to reside in London, the exquisite zest with which I relished it in occasional visits might go off, and I might grow tired of it. JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, you find no man, at all intellectual, who is willing to leave London. No, Sir, when a man is tired of London he is tired of life; for there is in London all that life can afford."

To obviate his apprehension, that by settling in London I might desert the seat of my ancestors, I assured him that I had old feudal principles to a degree of enthusiasm; and that I felt all the *dulcedo* of the *natale solum*. I reminded him, that the Laird of Auchinleck had an elegant house, in front of which he could ride ten miles forward upon his own territories, upon which he had upwards of six hundred people attached to him; that the family seat was rich in natural romantic beauties of rock, wood, and water; and that in my "morn of life" I had appropriated the finest descriptions in the ancient classics to certain scenes there, which were thus

¹ James de Douglas was requested by King Robert Bruce in his last hours to repair with his heart to Jerusalem, and humbly to deposit it at the sepulchre of our Lord; which, according to Boëce, whom Boswell seems to follow) he did in 1380; but other writers represent, probably more truly, that he was killed by the way, and that the heart was brought back and buried at Melrose.—*Hailes's Annals*, li. 148-9. Hence the *crowned heart* in the arms of Douglas.—C.

associated in my mind That when all this was considered, I should certainly pass a part of the year at home, and enjoy it the more from variety, and from bringing with me a share of the intellectual stores of the metropolis. He listened to all this, and kindly "hoped it might be as I now supposed."

He said, a country gentleman should bring his lady to visit London as soon as he can, that they may have agreeable topics for conversation when they are by themselves.

As I meditated trying my fortune in Westminster Hall, our conversation turned upon the profession of the law in England. JOHNSON. "You must not indulge too sanguine hopes, should you be called to our bar. I was told, by a very sensible lawyer, that there are a great many chances against any man's success in the profession of the law ; the candidates are so numerous, and those who get large practice so few. He said, it was by no means true that a man of good parts and application is sure of having business, though he, indeed, allowed that if such a man could but appear in a few causes, his merit would be known, and he would get forward ; but that the great risk was, that a man might pass half a lifetime in the courts, and never have an opportunity of showing his abilities."¹

We talked of employment being absolutely necessary to preserve the mind from wearying and growling fretful, especially in those who have a tendency to melancholy; and I mentioned to him a saying which somebody had related of an American savage, who, when an European was expatiating on all the advantages of money, put this question : "Will it purchase *occupation*?" JOHNSON. "Depend upon it, Sir, this saying is too refined for a savage. And, Sir, money *will* purchase occupation ; it will purchase all the conveniences of life ; it will purchase variety of company ; it will purchase all sorts of entertainment."

¹ Now, at the distance of fifteen years since this conversation passed, the observation which I have had an opportunity of making in Westminster Hall has convinced me, that, however true the opinion of Dr. Johnson's legal friend may have been some time ago, the same certainty of success cannot now be promised to the same display of merit. The reasons, however, of the rapid rise of some, and the disappointment of others equally respectable, are such as it might seem invidious to mention, and would require a longer detail than would be proper for this work.—B. Mr. Boswell's personal feelings here have clouded his perception, for Johnson's friend was far from holding out anything like a *certainty* of success—nay, he seems to have scarcely allowed a probability.—G.

I talked to him of Forster's "Voyage to the South Seas," which pleased me; but I found he did not like it. "Sir," said he, "there is a great affectation of fine writing in it." BOSWELL. "But he carries you along with him." JOHNSON. "No, Sir, he does not carry *me* along with him; he leaves me behind him: or rather, indeed he sets me before him; for he makes me turn over so many leaves at a time."

On Sunday, September 21, we went to the church of Ashbourne, which is one of the largest and most luminous that I have seen in any town of the same size. I felt great satisfaction in considering that I was supported in my fondness for solemn public worship by the general concurrence and munificence of mankind.

Johnson and Taylor were so different from each other, that I wondered at their preserving an intimacy. Their having been at school and college together might, in some degree, account for this: but Sir Joshua Reynolds has furnished me with a stronger reason; for Johnson mentioned to him, that he had been told by Taylor he was to be his heir. I shall not take upon me to animadvert upon this; but certain it is that Johnson paid great attention to Taylor. He now, however, said to me, "Sir, I love him; but I do not love him more; my regard for him does not increase. As it is said in the Apocrypha, 'his talk is of bullocks.'¹ I do not suppose he is very fond of my company. His habits are by no means sufficiently clerical: this he knows that I see; and no man likes to live under the eye of perpetual disapprobation."

I have no doubt that a good many sermons were composed for Taylor by Johnson. At this time I found upon his table a part of one which he had newly begun to write: and *Concio pro Taylora* appears in one of his diaries. When to these circumstances we add the internal evidence from the power of thinking and style, in the collection which the Reverend Mr. Hayes had published, with the *significant* title of "Sermons left for Publication, by the Reverend John Taylor, LL.D.," our conviction will be complete.²

¹ Ecclesiasticus, chap. xxxviii. v. 25. The whole chapter may be read as an admirable illustration of the superiority of cultivated minds over the gross and illiterate.

² "Before I release you, I must mention one more publication, on account of its singularity as well as its merit. It is a volume of sermons, published by Dr. Taylor, prebendary of Westminster, who is lately dead. He was an old friend and school-fellow of Dr. Johnson's,

I, however, would not have it thought that Dr. Taylor, though he could not write like Johnson, (as, indeed, who could?) did not sometimes compose sermons as good as those which we generally have from very respectable divines. He showed me one with notes on the margin in Johnson's hand-writing; and I was present when he read another to Johnson, that he might have his opinion of it, and Johnson said it was "very well." These, we may be sure, were not Johnson's; for he was above little arts, or tricks of deception.

Johnson was by no means of opinion that every man of a learned profession should consider it as incumbent upon him, or as necessary to his credit, to appear as an author. When, in the ardour of ambition for literary fame, I regretted to him one day that an eminent judge had nothing of it, and therefore would leave no perpetual monument of himself to posterity; "Alas! Sir," said Johnson, "what a mass of confusion should we have, if every bishop, and every judge, every lawyer, physician, and divine, were to write books?"

I mentioned to Johnson a respectable person of a very strong mind,¹ who had little of that tenderness which is common to human nature; as an instance of which, when I suggested to him that he should invite his son, who had been settled ten years in foreign parts, to come home and pay him a visit, his answer was, "No, no, let him mind his business." JOHNSON. "I do not agree with him, Sir, in this. Getting money is not all a man's business: to cultivate kindness is a valuable part of the business of life."

In the evening, Johnson, being in very good spirits, entertained us with several characteristical portraits: I regret that any of them escaped my retention and diligence. I found from experience, that to collect my friend's conversation so as to exhibit it with any degree of its original flavour, it was necessary to write it down with-

and was long suspected of preaching sermons written by the doctor. To confute this calumny, he ordered this volume of sermons to be published after his death. But I am afraid it will not quite answer his purpose; for I will venture to say, that there is not a man in England who knows anything of Dr. Johnson's peculiarities of style, sentiment, and composition, that will not instantly pronounce these sermons to be his. Indeed, they are (some of them at least) in his very best manner; and Taylor was no more capable of writing them than of making an epic poem."—*Bp. Porteus to Dr. Beattie*, 1788.—MARKLAND.

¹ He means his father, Lord Auchinleck, and the absent son was David, who spent so many years in Spain.—O.

out delay. To record his sayings, after some distance of time, was like preserving or pickling long-kept and faded fruits, or other vegetables, which, when in that state, have little or nothing of their taste when fresh.

I shall present my readers with a series of what I gathered this evening from the Johnsonian garden.

"My friend, the late Earl of Corke, had a great desire to maintain the literary character of his family : he was a genteel man, but did not keep up the dignity of his rank. He was so generally civil, that nobody thanked him for it."

"Did we not hear so much said of Jack Wilkes, we should think more highly of his conversation. Jack has a great variety of talk, Jack is a scholar, and Jack has the manners of a gentleman. But after hearing his name sounded from pole to pole, as the phoenix of convivial felicity, we are disappointed in his company. He has always been at *me* : but I would do Jack a kindness, rather than not. The contest is now over."

"Garrick's gaiety of conversation has delicacy and elegance : Foote makes you laugh more; but Foote has the air of a buffoon paid for entertaining the company. He, indeed, well deserves his hire."

"Colley Cibber once consulted me as to one of his birthday odes, a long time before it was wanted. I objected very freely to several passages. Cibber lost patience, and would not read his ode to an end. When we had done with criticism we walked over to Richardson's, the author of '*Clarissa*,' and I wondered to find Richardson displeased that I 'did not treat Cibber with more *respect*.' Now, Sir, to talk of *respect* for a *player*!"¹ (smiling disdainfully.) BOSWELL. "There, Sir, you are always heretical ; you never will allow merit to a player." JOHNSON. "Merit, Sir ! what merit ? Do you respect a rope-dancer or a ballad-singer ?" BOSWELL. "No, Sir ;

¹ Perhaps Richardson's displeasure was created by Johnson's paying no respect to the *age* of Cibber, who was almost old enough to have been his grandfather. Cibber had left the stage, and ceased to be a player before Johnson left Oxford ; so that he had no more reason to despise Cibber for that profession, than Cibber would have had to remind him of the days when he was usher at a school.—[Cibber quitted the stage in 1730, but appeared occasionally on it afterwards ; particularly so late as 1744, as Pandulph in *King John* ; so that Johnson might reasonably talk of him as being still a player.]

but we respect a great player, as a man who can conceive lofty sentiments, and can express them gracefully." JOHNSON. "What! Sir, a fellow who claps a hump on his back, and a lump on his leg, and cries, '*I am Richard the Third?*' Nay, Sir, a ballad-singer is a higher man, for he does two things; he repeats and he sings: there is both recitation and music in his performance; the player only recites." BOSWELL. "My dear Sir! you may turn anything into ridicule. I allow, that a player of farce is not entitled to respect; he does a little thing: but he who can represent exalted characters, and touch the noblest passions, has very respectable powers; and mankind have agreed in admiring great talents for the stage. We must consider, too, that a great player does what very few are capable to do; his art is a very rare faculty. *Who* can repeat Hamlet's soliloquy, '*To be, or not to be,*' as Garrick does it?" JOHNSON. "Anybody may. Jemmy, there (a boy about eight years old, who was in the room,) will do as well in a week." BOSWELL. "No, no, Sir: and as a proof of the merit of great acting, and of the value which mankind set upon it, Garrick has got a hundred thousand pounds." JOHNSON. "Is getting a hundred thousand pounds a proof of excellence? That has been done by a scoundrel commissary."

This was most fallacious reasoning. I was *sure*, for once, that I had the best side of the argument. I boldly maintained the just distinction between a tragedian and a mere theatrical droll; between those who rouse our terror and pity, and those who only make us laugh. "If," said I, "Betterton and Foote were to walk into this room, you would respect Betterton much more than Foote." JOHNSON. "If Betterton were to walk into this room with Foote, Foote would soon drive him out of it. Foote, Sir, *quatenus* Foote, has powers superior to them all." ¹

The fact was, that Johnson could not see the passions as they rose and chased one another in the varied features of the expressive face of Garrick. Mr. Murphy remembered being in conversation with Johnson near the side of the scenes, during the tragedy of king Lear; when Garrick came off the stage, he said, "You two talk so loud, you destroy all my feelings."—"Præhee," replied Johnson, "do not talk of feelings; Punch has no feelings."—C.

CHAPTER XVI.

1777—1778.

Ashbourne—Personal Disputes—Duke of Devonshire—Burke's Definition of a Free Government—**Ham**—The Christian Revelation—Mungo Campbell—Dr. Taylor's *Sull-dog*—"Esop at play"—Memory—Rochester's Poems—Prior—Hypochondria—**Boeckx**—Homer and Virgil—Lord Bacon—Topham Beauclerk—Grainger's "Ode on Solitude"—Music—Happiness—Future State—Slave Trade—American Independence—Corruption of Parliament—Planting—"Goddity Johnson"—Decision of the Negro Cause—Mr. Saunders Welch—Advice to Travellers—Correspondence.

ON Monday, September 22, when at breakfast, I unguardedly said to Dr. Johnson, "I wish I saw you and Mrs. Macaulay together." He grew very angry; and, after a pause, while a cloud gathered on his brow, he burst out, "No, Sir; you would not see us quarrel, to make you sport. Don't you know that it is very uncivil to *pit* two people against one another?" Then, checking himself, and wishing to be more gentle, he added, "I do not say you should be hanged or drowned for this; but it *is* very uncivil." Dr. Taylor thought him in the wrong, and spoke to him privately of it; but I afterwards acknowledged to Johnson that I was to blame, for I candidly owned, that I meant to express a desire to see a contest between Mrs. Macaulay and him; but then I knew how the contest would end; so that I was to see him triumph. JOHNSON. "Sir, you cannot be sure how a contest will end; and no man has a right to engage two people in a dispute by which their passions may be inflamed, and they may part with bitter resentment against each other. I would sooner keep company with a man from whom I must guard my pockets, than with a man who contrives to bring me into a dispute with somebody that he may hear it. This is the great fault of—(naming one of our friends), endeavouring to introduce a subject upon which he knows two people in the company differ." BOSWELL. "But he told me, Sir, he does it for instruction." JOHNSON. "Whatever the motive be, Sir, the man who does so,

does very wrong. He has no more right to instruct himself at such risk, than he has to make two people fight a duel, that he may learn how to defend himself."

He found great fault with a gentleman of our acquaintance for keeping a bad table. "Sir," said he, "when a man is invited to dinner, he is disappointed if he does not get something good. I advised Mrs. Thrale, who has no card-parties at her house, to give sweetmeats, and such good things, in an evening, as are not commonly given, and she would find company enough come to her; for everybody loves to have things which please the palate put in their way, without trouble or preparation." Such was his attention to the *minutiae* of life and manners.

He thus characterised the Duke of Devonshire,¹ grandfather of the present representative of that very respectable family: "He was not a man of superior abilities, but he was a man strictly faithful to his word. If, for instance, he had promised you an acorn, and none had grown that year in his woods, he would not have contented himself with that excuse: he would have sent to Denmark for it. So unconditional was he in keeping his word; so high as to the point of honour." This was a liberal testimony from the Tory Johnson to the virtue of a great Whig nobleman.

Mr. Burke's "Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol, on the Affairs of America," being mentioned, Johnson censured the composition much, and he ridiculed the definition of a free government; *viz.*, "For any practical purpose, it is what the people thinks so." "I will let the King of France govern me on those conditions," said he, "for it is to be governed just as I please." And when Dr. Taylor talked of a girl being sent to a parish workhouse, and asked how much she could be obliged to work, "Why," said Johnson, "as much as is reasonable; and what is that? as much as *she thinks* reasonable."

Dr. Johnson obligingly proposed to carry me to see Ilam, a romantic scene, now belonging to a family of the name of Port, but formerly the seat of the Congreves. I suppose it is well described in some of the tours. Johnson described it distinctly and vividly, at which I could not but express to him my wonder; because, though my eyes, as he observed, were better than his, I could not

¹ William, third Duke of Devonshire, who died in 1758.—C.

by any means equal him in representing visible objects. I said, the difference between us in this respect was as that between a man who has a bad instrument, but plays well on it, and a man who has a good instrument, on which he can play very imperfectly.

I recollect a very fine amphitheatre, surrounded with hills covered with woods, and walks neatly formed along the side of a rocky steep, on the quarter next the house, with recesses under projections of rock, overshadowed with trees; in one of which recesses we were told, Congreve wrote his "Old Bachelor." We viewed a remarkable natural curiosity at Ilam; two rivers bursting near each other from the rock, not from immediate springs, but after having run for many miles under ground. Plott, in his "History of Staffordshire" (p. 69), gives an account of this curiosity; but Johnson would not believe it, though we had the attestation of the gardener, who said he had put in corks where the river *Manifold* sinks into the ground, and had caught them in a net, placed before one of the openings where the water bursts out. Indeed, such subterraneous courses of water are found in various parts of our globe.¹

Talking of Dr. Johnson's unwillingness to believe extraordinary things, I ventured to say, "Sir, you come near Hume's argument against miracles, that 'It is more probable witnesses should lie, or be mistaken, than that they should happen.'" JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, Hume, taking the proposition simply, is right. But the Christian revelation is not proved by the miracles alone, but as connected with prophecies, and with the doctrines in confirmation of which the miracles were wrought."

He repeated his observation, that the differences among Christians are really of no consequence. "For instance," said he, "if a Protestant objects to a Papist, 'You worship images,' the Papist can answer, 'I do not insist on your doing it; you may be a very good Papist without it; I do it only as a help to my devotion.'" I said, the great article of Christianity is the revelation of immortality. Johnson admitted it was.

In the evening, a gentleman farmer, who was on a visit at Dr Taylor's, attempted to dispute with Johnson in favour of Mungo Campbell, who shot Alexander, Earl of Eglintounne, upon his having

¹ See Plott's "History of Staffordshire," p. 86.

fallen, when retreating from his lordship, who he believed was about to seize his gun, as he had threatened to do. He said he should have done just as Campbell did. JOHNSON. "Whoever would do as Campbell did, deserves to be hanged; not that I could, as a juryman, have found him legally guilty of murder; but I am glad they found means to convict him." The gentleman farmer said, "A poor man has as much honour as a rich man; and Campbell had *that* to defend." Johnson exclaimed, "A poor man has no honour." The English yeoman, not dismayed, proceeded: "Lord Eglintoune was a damned fool to run on upon Campbell, after being warned that Campbell would shoot him if he did." Johnson, who could not bear anything like swearing, angrily replied, "He was *not* a *damned* fool: he only thought too well of Campbell. He did not believe Campbell would be such a *damned* scoundrel, as to do so *damned* a thing." His emphasis on *damned*, accompanied with frowning looks, reproved his opponent's want of decorum in *his* presence.

Talking of the danger of being mortified by rejection, when making approaches to the acquaintance of the great, I observed, "I am, however, generally for trying, 'Nothing venture, nothing have.'" JOHNSON. "Very true, Sir; but I have always been more afraid of failing, than hopeful of success." And, indeed, though he had all just respect for rank, no man ever less courted the favour of the great.

During this interview at Ashbourne, Johnson seemed to be more uniformly social, cheerful, and alert, than I had almost ever seen him. He was prompt on great occasions and on small. Taylor, who praised everything of his own to excess, in short, "whose geese were all swans," as the proverb says, expatiated on the excellence of his bull-dog, which he told us was "perfectly well shaped." Johnson, after examining the animal attentively, thus repressed the vain-glory of our host:—"No, Sir, he is *not* well shaped; for there is not the quick transition from the thickness of the fore-part, to the *tenuity*—the thin part—behind, which a bull-dog ought to have." This *tenuity* was the only *hard word* that I heard him use during this interview, and it will be observed, he instantly put another expression in its place. Taylor said, a small bull-dog was as good as

a large one. JOHNSON. "No, Sir; for, in proportion to his size, he has strength: and your argument would prove, that a good bull-dog may be as small as a mouse." It was amazing how he entered with perspicuity and keenness upon everything that occurred in conversation. Most men, whom I know, would no more think of discussing a question about a bull-dog, than of attacking a bull.

I cannot allow any fragment whatever that floats in my memory concerning the great subject of this work to be lost. Though a small particular may appear trifling to some, it will be relished by others; while every little spark adds something to the general blaze; and to please the true, candid, warm admirers of Johnson, and in any degree increase the splendour of his reputation, I bid defiance to the shafts of ridicule, or even of malignity. Showers of them have been discharged at my "Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides;" yet it still sails unhurt along the stream of time, and as an attendant upon Johnson,

"Pursues the triumph, and partakes the gale."

One morning after breakfast, when the sun shone bright, we walked out together, and "pored" for some time with placid indolence upon an artificial waterfall, which Dr. Taylor had made by building a strong dyke of stone across the river behind the garden. It was now somewhat obstructed by branches of trees and other rubbish, which had come down the river, and settled close to it. Johnson, partly from a desire to see it play more freely, and partly from that inclination to activity which will animate at times the most inert and sluggish mortal, took a long pole which was lying on a bank, and pushed down several parcels of this wreck with painful assiduity, while I stood quietly by, wondering to behold the sage thus curiously employed, and smiling with a humorous satisfaction each time when he carried his point. He worked till he was quite out of breath; and having found a large dead cat so heavy that he could not move it after several efforts, "Come," said he (throwing down the pole), "*you* shall take it now;" which I accordingly did, and being a fresh man, soon made the cat tumble over the cascade. This may be laughed at as too trifling to record; but it is a small characteristic trait in the Flemish picture which I give of my friend,

and in which, therefore, I mark the most minute particulars. And let it be remembered, that "*Æsop at play*" is one of the instructive apologues of antiquity.

I mentioned an old gentleman of our acquaintance whose memory was beginning to fail. JOHNSON. "There must be a diseased mind where there is a failure of memory at seventy. A man's head, Sir, must be morbid if he fails so soon." My friend, being now himself sixty-eight, might think thus: but I imagine, that *threescore and ten*, the Psalmist's period of sound human life in later ages, may have a failure, though there be no disease in the constitution.

Talking of Rochester's poems, he said he had given them to Mr. Steevens to castrate¹ for the edition of the poets, to which he was to write prefaces. Dr. Taylor (the only time I ever heard him say anything witty)² observed, that "if Rochester had been castrated himself, his exceptionable poems would not have been written." I asked if Burnet had not given a good life of Rochester. JOHNSON. "We have a good *Death*; there is not much *Life*." I asked whether Prior's poems were to be printed entire: Johnson said they were. I mentioned Lord Hailes's censure of Prior, in his preface to a collection of "*Sacred Poems*," by various hands, published by him at Edinburgh a great many years ago, where he mentions "those impure tales which will be the eternal opprobrium of their ingenious author." JOHNSON. "Sir, Lord Hailes has forgot. There is nothing in Prior that will excite to lewdness. If Lord Hailes thinks there is, he must be more combustible than other people." I instanced the tale of "*Paulo Purganti and his wife*." JOHNSON. "Sir, there is nothing there, but that his wife wanted to be kissed, when poor Paulo was out of pocket. No, Sir, Prior is a lady's book. No lady is ashamed to have it standing in her library."

The hypochondriac disorder being mentioned, Dr. Johnson did not think it so common as I supposed. "Dr. Taylor," said he, "is the same one day as another. Burke and Reynolds are the same. Beaucherk, except when in pain, is the same. I am not so myself; but this I do not mention commonly."

¹ This was unnecessary, for it had been done in the early part of the present century by Jacob Tonson.—M.

² I am told that Horace, Earl of Orford, has a collection of *Bon-Mots*, by persons who never said but one.—B.

I complained of a wretched changefulness, so that I could not preserve, for any long continuance, the same views of anything. It was most comfortable to me to experience in Dr. Johnson's company a relief from this uneasiness. His steady vigorous mind held firm before me those objects which my own feeble and tremulous imagination frequently presented in such a wavering state, that my reason could not judge well of them.

Dr. Johnson advised me to-day to have as many books about me as I could ; that I might read upon any subject upon which I had a desire for instruction at the time. "What you read *then*," said he, "you will remember ; but if you have not a book immediately ready, and the subject moulds in your mind, it is a chance if you have again a desire to study it." He added, "If a man never has an eager desire for instruction, he should prescribe a task for himself. But it is better when a man reads from immediate inclination."

He repeated a good many lines of Horace's Odes while we were in the chaise ; I remember particularly the Ode "*Eheu fugaces*."

He said, the dispute as to the comparative excellence of Homer or Virgil was inaccurate. "We must consider," said he, "whether Homer was not the greatest poet, though Virgil may have produced the finest poem." Virgil was indebted to Homer for the whole invention of the structure of an epic poem, and for many of his beauties."

He told me, that Bacon was a favourite author with him ; but he had never read his works till he was compiling the English Dictionary, in which he said, I might see Bacon very often quoted. Mr. Seward recollects his having mentioned, that a dictionary of the English language might be compiled from Bacon's writings alone, and that he had once an intention of giving an edition of Bacon, at least of his English works, and writing the life of that great man. Had he executed this intention, there can be no doubt

¹ I am informed by Mr. Langton, that a great many years ago he was present when this question was agitated between Dr. Johnson and Mr. Burke ; and, to use Johnson's phrase, they "talked their best ;" Johnson for Homer, Burke for Virgil. It may well be supposed to have been one of the ablest and most brilliant contests that ever was exhibited. How much must we regret that it has not been preserved !

² But where is the *inaccuracy*, if the admirers of Homer contend, that he was not only prior to Virgil in point of time, but superior in excellence ?—J. BOSWELL, JUN.

that he would have done it in a most masterly manner. Mallet's Life of Bacon has no inconsiderable merit as an acute and elegant dissertation relative to its subject ; but Mallet's mind was not comprehensive enough to embrace the vast extent of Lord Verulam's genius and research. Dr. Warburton therefore observed, with witty justness, " that Mallet in his Life of Bacon had forgotten that he was a philosopher ; and if he should write the Life of the Duke of Marlborough, which he had undertaken to do, he would probably forget that he was a general."

Wishing to be satisfied what degree of truth there was in a story which a friend of Johnson's and mine had told me to his disadvantage, I mentioned it to him in direct terms ; and it was to this effect :—that a gentleman ¹ who had lived in great intimacy with him, shown him much kindness, and even relieved him from a spunging-house, having afterwards fallen into bad circumstances, was one day, when Johnson was at dinner with him, seized for debt, and carried to prison ; that Johnson sat still undisturbed, and went on eating and drinking ; upon which the gentleman's sister, who was present, could not suppress her indignation : " What, Sir !" said she, " are you so unfeeling, as not even to offer to go to my brother in his distress ; you who have been so much obliged to him ?" And that Johnson answered, " Madam, I owe him no obligation ; what he did for me he would have done for a dog."

Johnson assured me, that the story was absolutely false ; but, like a man conscious of being in the right, and desirous of completely vindicating himself from such a charge, he did not arrogantly rest on a mere denial, and on his general character, but proceeded thus :—" Sir, I was very intimate with that gentleman, and was once relieved by him from an arrest ; but I never was present when he was arrested, never knew that he was arrested, and I believe he never was in difficulties after the time when he relieved me. I loved him much ; yet, in talking of his general character, I may have said, though I do not remember that I ever did say so, that as his

¹ It appears from part of the original journal in Mr. Anderson's papers, that the friend who told the story was Mr. Beaucherk, and the gentleman and lady alluded to were Mr. (probably Henry) and Miss Harvey. There is reason to fear that Boswell's indiscretion in betraying Mr. Beaucherk's name impaired the cordiality between him and Dr. Johnson. — C. 1835.

generosity proceeded from no principle, but was a part of his profusion, he would do for a dog what he would do for a friend : but I never applied this remark to any particular instance, and certainly not to his kindness to me. If a profuse man, who does not value his money, and gives a large sum to a whore, gives half as much, or an equally large sum to relieve a friend. it cannot be esteemed as a virtue. This was all that I could say of that gentleman ; and, if said at all, it must have been said after his death. Sir, I would have gone to the world's end to relieve him. The remark about the dog, if made by me, was such a sally as might escape one when painting a man highly."

On Tuesday, September 23, Johnson was remarkably cordial to me. It being necessary for me to return to Scotland soon, I had fixed on the next day for my setting out, and I felt a tender concern at the thought of parting with him. He had, at this time, frankly communicated to me many particulars, which are inserted in this work in their proper places ; and once, when I happened to mention that the expense of my jaunt would come to much more than I had computed, he said, " Why, Sir, if the expense were to be an inconvenience, you would have reason to regret it ; but, if you have had the money to spend, I know not that you could have purchased as much pleasure with it in any other way."

During this interview at Ashbourne, Johnson and I frequently talked with wonderful pleasure of mere trifles which had occurred in our tour to the Hebrides ; for it had left a most agreeable and lasting impression upon his mind.

He found fault with me for using the phrase to *make* money. " Don't you see," said he, " the impropriety of it ? To *make* money is to *coin* it ; you should say *get* money." The phrase is, however, I think, pretty correct. But Johnson was at all times jealous of infractions upon the genuine English language, and prompt to repress colloquial barbarisms ; such as *pledging myself* for *undertaking* ; *line* for *department* or *branch*, as the *civil line*, the *banking line*. He was particularly indignant against the almost universal use of the word *idea*, in the sense of *notion* or *opinion*, when it is clear that *idea* can only signify something of which an image can be formed in the mind. We may have an *idea* or *image* of a mountain, a tree, a building ;

but we cannot surely have an *idea* or *image* of an *argument* or *proposition*. Yet we hear the sages of the law "delivering their *ideas* upon a question under consideration ;" and the first speakers in parliament "entirely coinciding in the *idea* which has been ably stated by an honourable member ;" or "reprobating an *idea* as unconstitutional, and fraught with the most dangerous consequences to a great and free country." Johnson called this "modern cant."

I perceived that he pronounced the word *heard*, as if spelt with a double *e*, *heerd*, instead of sounding it *herd*, as is most usually done.¹ He said, his reason was, that if it were pronounced *herd*, there would be a single exception from the English pronunciation of the syllable *ear*, and he thought it better not to have that exception.

He praised Grainger's "Ode on Solitude," in Dodsley's collection, and repeated, with great energy, the exordium :—

"O Solitude, romantic maid!
Whether by nodding towers you tread;
Or haunt the desert's trackless gloom,
Or hover o'er the yawning tomb;
Or climb the Andes' clifted side,
Or by the Nile's coy source abide;
Or, starting from your half-year's sleep,
From Hecla view the thawing deep:
Or, at the purple dawn of day,
Tadmor's marble waste survey."

observing, "This, Sir, is very noble."

In the evening our gentleman-farmer, and two others, entertained themselves and the company with a great number of tunes on the fiddle. Johnson desired to have "Let Ambition fire thy Mind" played over again, and appeared to give a patient attention to it ; though he owned to me that he was very insensible to the power of music. I told him that it affected me to such a degree, as often to agitate my nerves painfully, producing in my mind alternate sensa-

¹ In the age of Queen Elizabeth this word was frequently written, as doubtless it was pronounced, *hard*.—M. I consider the pronunciation of this word, which Boswell justly makes an objection to, as provincial ; but I think he must have misapprehended Dr. Johnson's "reason." There are many words, in which these three letters occur, that are pronounced similarly, *e. g. earn, learn, &c.* ; nor would the single exception be an objection, as uniformity is not the *jus et norma loquendi* in English.—HALL.

tions of pathetic dejection, so that I was ready to shed tears ; and of daring resolution, so that I was inclined to rush into the thickest part of the battle. "Sir," said he, "I should never hear of it, if it made me such a fool."

Much of the effect of music, I am satisfied, is owing to the association of ideas. That air, which instantly and irresistibly excites the Swiss, when in a foreign land, the *maladie du pays*,¹ has, I am told, no intrinsic power of sound. And I know from my own experience, that Scotch reels, though brisk, make me melancholy, because I used to hear them in my early years, at a time when Mr. Pitt called for soldiers, "from the mountains of the north," and numbers of brave Highlanders were going abroad, never to return. Whereas the airs in "The Beggar's Opera," many of which are very soft, never fail to render me gay, because they are associated with the warm sensations and high spirits of London. This evening, while some of the tunes of ordinary composition were played with no great skill, my frame was agitated, and I was conscious of a generous attachment to Dr. Johnson, as my preceptor and friend, mixed with an affectionate regret that he was an old man, whom I should probably lose in a short time. I thought I could defend him at the point of my sword. My reverence and affection for him were in full glow. I said to him, "My dear Sir, we must meet every year, if you don't quarrel with me." JOHNSON. "Nay, Sir, you are more likely to quarrel with me, than I with you. My regard for you is greater almost than I have words to express ; but I do not choose to be always repeating it : write it down in the first leaf of your pocket-book, and never doubt of it again."

I talked to him of misery being "the doom of man," in this life, as displayed in his "Vanity of Human Wishes."² Yet I observed that things were done upon the supposition of happiness ; grand houses were built, fine gardens were made, splendid places of public

¹ The *Rans des Vaches*—"an air," says Rousseau, "so dear to the Swiss, that it was forbidden, under the pain of death, to play it to the troops, as it immediately drew tears from them, and made them who heard it desert, or die of what is called *maladie du pays*, so ardent a desire did it excite to return to their country. It is in vain to seek in this air for energetic accents capable of producing such astonishing effects, for which strangers are unable to account from the music, which is in itself uncouth and wild."

² "Yet hope not life from grief or danger free,
Nor think the doom of man revers'd for thee."

amusement were contrived, and crowded with company. JOHNSON. "Alas, Sir, these are only struggles for happiness. When I first entered Ranelagh, it gave an expansion and gay sensation to my mind, such as I never experienced any where else. But, as Xerxes wept when he viewed his immense army, and considered that not one of that great multitude would be alive a hundred years afterwards, so it went to my heart to consider that there was not one in all that brilliant circle that was not afraid to go home and think ; but that the thoughts of each individual there would be distressing when alone." This reflection was experimentally just. The feeling of languor,¹ which succeeds the animation of gaiety, is itself a very severe pain ; and when the mind is then vacant, a thousand disappointments and vexations rush in and excruciate. Will not many even of my fairest readers allow this to be true ?

I suggested, that being in love, and flattered with hopes of success ; or having some favourite scheme in view for the next day, might prevent that wretchedness of which we had been talking. JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, it may sometimes be so as you suppose ; but my conclusion is in general but too true."

While Johnson and I stood in calm conference by ourselves in Dr. Taylor's garden, at a pretty late hour in a serene autumn night, looking up to the heavens, I directed the discourse to the subject of a future state. My friend was in a placid and most benignant frame of mind. "Sir," said he, "I do not imagine that all things will be made clear to us immediately after death, but that the ways of Providence will be explained to us very gradually." I ventured to ask him whether, although the words of some texts of Scripture seemed strong in support of the dreadful doctrine of an eternity of punishment, we might not hope that the denunciation was figurative, and would not literally be executed. JOHNSON. "Sir, you are to consider the intention of punishment in a future state. We have no reason to be sure that we shall then be no longer liable to

¹ Pope mentions,

"Stretch'd on the rack of a too easy chair."

But I recollect a couplet quite apposite to my subject in "Virtue, an Ethic Epistle," a beautiful and instructive poem, by an anonymous writer, in 1758 ; who, treating of pleasure in excess, says,

"Till languor, suffering on the rack of bliss,
Confess that man was never made for this."

offend against God. We do not know that even the angels are quite in a state of security ; nay, we know that some of them have fallen. It may therefore, perhaps, be necessary, in order to preserve both men and angels in a state of rectitude, that they should have continually before them the punishment of those who have deviated from it ; but we hope that by some other means a fall from rectitude may be prevented. Some of the texts of Scripture upon this subject are, as you observe, indeed strong ; but they may admit of a mitigated interpretation." He talked to me upon this awful and delicate question in a gentle tone, and as if afraid to be decisive.

After supper I accompanied him to his apartment, and at my request he dictated to me an argument in favour of the negro who was then claiming his liberty, in an action in the court of session in Scotland. He had always been very zealous against slavery in every form, in which I with all deference thought that he discovered "a zeal without knowledge." Upon one occasion, when in company with some very grave men at Oxford, his toast was, "Here's to the next insurrection of the negroes in the West Indies." His violent prejudice against our West Indian and American settlers appeared whenever there was an opportunity. Towards the conclusion of his "Taxation no Tyranny," he says, "How is it that we hear the loudest *yelps* for liberty among the drivers of negroes ?" and in his conversation with Mr. Wilkes he asked, "Where did Beckford and Trecothick learn English ?" That Trecothick could both speak and write good English is well known. I myself was favoured with his correspondence concerning the brave Corsicans. And that Beckford could speak it with a spirit of honest resolution even to his majesty, as his "faithful lord Mayor of London," is commemorated by the noble monument erected to him in Guildhall.

The Argument dictated by Dr. Johnson was as follows :

"It must be agreed that in most ages many countries have had part of their inhabitants in a state of slavery ; yet it may be doubted whether slavery can ever be supposed the natural condition of man. It is impossible not to conceive that men in their original state were equal ; and very difficult to imagine how one would be subjected to another but by violent compulsion. An individual may, indeed, forfeit his liberty by a crime ; but he cannot by that crime forfeit the liberty of his children. What is true of a criminal seems true likewise of a captive. A man may accept life from a conquering enemy on

condition of perpetual servitude; but it is very doubtful whether he can entail that servitude on his descendants; for no man can stipulate without commission for another. The condition which he himself accepts, his son or grandson would have rejected. If we should admit, what perhaps may with more reason be denied, that there are certain relations between man and man which may make slavery necessary and just, yet it can never be proved that he who is now suing for his freedom ever stood in any of those relations. He is certainly subject by no law, but that of violence, to his present master; who pretends no claim to his obedience, but that he bought him from a merchant of slaves, whose right to sell him never was examined. It is said, that according to the constitutions of Jamaica he was legally enslaved; these constitutions are merely positive; and apparently injurious to the rights of mankind, because whoever is exposed to sale is condemned to slavery without appeal, by whatever fraud or violence he might have been originally brought into the merchant's power. In our own time princes have been sold, by wretches to whose care they were intrusted, that they might have an European education; but when once they were brought to a market in the plantations, little would avail either their dignity or their wrongs. The laws of Jamaica afford a negro no redress. His colour is considered as a sufficient testimony against him. It is to be lamented that moral right should ever give way to political convenience. But if temptations of interest are sometimes too strong for human virtue, let us at least retain a virtue where there is no temptation to quit it. In the present case there is apparent right on one side, and no convenience on the other. Inhabitants of this island can neither gain riches nor power by taking away the liberty of any part of the human species. The sum of the argument is this:—No man is by nature the property of another. The defendant is, therefore, by nature free. The rights of nature must be some way forfeited before they can be justly taken away. That the defendant has, by any act, forfeited the rights of nature, we require to be proved; and if no proof of such forfeiture can be given, we doubt not but the justice of the court will declare him free."

I record Dr. Johnson's argument fairly upon this particular case; where, perhaps, he was in the right. But I beg leave to enter my most solemn protest against his general doctrine with respect to the slave trade. For I will resolutely say, that his unfavorable notion of it was owing to prejudice, and imperfect or false information. The wild and dangerous attempt which has for some time been persisted in to obtain an act of our legislature, to abolish so very important and necessary a branch of commercial interest, must have been crushed at once, had not the insignificance of the zealots who vainly took the lead in it made the vast body of planters, mer

chants, and others, whose immense properties are involved in that trade, reasonably enough suppose that there could be no danger. The encouragement which the attempt has received excites my wonder and indignation ; and though some men of superior abilities have supported it, whether from a love of temporary popularity when prosperous, or a love of general mischief when desperate, my opinion is unshaken. To abolish a *status*, which in all ages God has sanctioned, and man has continued, would not only be *robbery* to an innumerable class of our fellow-subjects, but it would be extreme cruelty to the African savages, a portion of whom it saves from massacre, or intolerable bondage in their own country, and introduces into a much happier state of life ; especially now when their passage to the West Indies and their treatment there is humanely regulated. To abolish that trade would be to

“—— shut the gates of mercy on mankind.”

Whatever may have passed elsewhere concerning it, the House of Lords is wise and independent :

“Intaminatis fulget honoribus;
Nec sumit aut ponit secures
Arbitrio popularis auræ.”¹

I have read, conversed, and thought much upon the subject, and would recommend to all who are capable of conviction an excellent tract by my learned and ingenious friend, John Ranby, Esq., entitled “Doubts on the Abolition of the Slave Trade.” To Mr. Ranby’s “Doubts,” I will apply Lord Chancellor Hardwicke’s expression in praise of a Scotch law book, called “Dirleton’s Doubts;” “*His doubts*,” said his lordship, “are better than most people’s *certainities*.”

When I said now to Johnson, that I was afraid I kept him too late up, “No, Sir,” said he, “I don’t care though I sit all night

¹ “Undisappointed in designs,
With native honours Virtue shines;
Nor takes up power, nor lays it down,
As giddy rabbles smile or frown.”—ELPHINSTON.

with you." This was an animated speech from a man in his sixty-ninth year.²

Had I been as attentive not to displease him as I ought to have been, I know not but this vigil might have been fulfilled ; but I unluckily entered upon the controversy concerning the right of Great Britain to tax America, and attempted to argue in favour of our fellow-subjects on the other side of the Atlantic. I insisted that America might be very well governed, and made to yield sufficient revenue by the means of *influence*, as exemplified in Ireland, while the people might be pleased with the imagination of their participating of the British constitution, by having a body of representatives, without whose consent money could not be exacted from them. Johnson could not bear my thus opposing his avowed opinion, which he had exerted himself with an extreme degree of heat to enforce ; and the violent agitation into which he was thrown, while answering, or rather reprimanding me, alarmed me so, that I heartily repented of my having unthinkingly introduced the subject. I myself, however, grew warm, and the change was great, from the calm state of philosophical discussion in which we had a little before been pleasingly employed.

I talked of the corruption of the British parliament, in which I alleged that any question, however unreasonable or unjust, might be carried by a venal majority ; and I spoke with high admiration of the Roman senate, as if composed of men sincerely desirous to resolve what they should think best for their country. My friend would allow no such character to the Roman senate ; and he main-

² Dr. Johnson loved late hours extremely, or more properly hated early ones. Nothing was more terrifying to him than the idea of retiring to bed, which he never would call going to rest, or suffer another to call so. " I lie down," said he, " that my acquaintance may sleep ; but I lie down to endure oppressive misery, and soon rise again to pass the night in anxiety and pain." By this pathetic manner, which no one ever possessed in so eminent a degree, he used to shock me from quitting his company, till I hurt my own health not a little by sitting up with him when I was myself far from well : nor was it an easy matter to oblige him even by compliance, for he always maintained that no one forbore their own gratifications for the sake of pleasing another, and if one *did* sit up it was probably to amuse one's self. Some right, however, he certainly had to say so, as he made his company exceedingly entertaining when he had once forced one, by his vehement lamentations and piercing reproofs, not to quit the room, but to sit quietly and make tea for him, as I often did in London till four o'clock in the morning. At Streatham I managed better, having always some friend who was kind enough to engage him in talk, and favour my retreat.—Prozzi.

tained that the British parliament was not corrupt, and that there was no occasion to corrupt its members ; asserting, that there was hardly ever any question of great importance before parliament, any question in which a man might not very well vote either upon one side or the other. He said there had been none in his time except that respecting America.

We were fatigued by the contest, which was produced by my want of caution ; and he was not then in the humour to slide into easy and cheerful talk. It therefore so happened, that we were after an hour or two very willing to separate and go to bed.

On Wednesday, September 24, I went into Dr. Johnson's room before he got up, and finding that the storm of the preceding night was quite laid, I sat down upon his bedside, and he talked with as much readiness and good humour as ever. He recommended to me to plant a considerable part of a large moorish farm which I had purchased, and he made several calculations of the expense and profit ; for he delighted in exercising his mind on the science of numbers. He pressed upon me the importance of planting at the first in a very sufficient manner, quoting the saying, "*In bello non licet bis errare :*" and adding, "this is equally true in planting."

I spoke with gratitude of Dr. Taylor's hospitality ; and as evidence that it was not on account of his good table alone that Johnson visited him often, I mentioned a little anecdote which had escaped my friend's recollection, and at hearing which repeated, he smiled. One evening, when I was sitting with him, Frank delivered this message : "Sir, Dr. Taylor sends his compliments to you, and begs you will dine with him to-morrow. "He has got a hare." My compliments," said Johnson, "and I'll dine with him—hare or rabbit."

After breakfast I departed, and pursued my journey northwards.¹

¹ "Ashbourne, Sept. 25, 1777.—Boswell is gone, and is, I hope, pleased that he has been here ; though to look on anything with pleasure is not very common. He has been gay and good-humoured in his usual way, but we have not agreed upon any other expedition."

"Sept. 29.—He says, his wife does not love me quite well yet, though we have made a formal peace. He kept his journal very diligently ; but then what was there to journalise ? I should be glad to see what he says of [Taylor]."

"Oct. 18.—I cannot but think on your kindness and my *master's*. Life has, upon the whole, been short, very short, of my early expectation ; but the acquisition of such a friendship, at an age when new friendships are seldom acquired, is something better than the gene-

I took my post-chaise from the Green Man, a very good 'un at Ashbourne, the mistress of which, a mighty civil gentlewoman, courtesying very low, presented me with an engraving of the sign of her house; to which she had subjoined, in her own hand-writing, an address in such singular simplicity of style, that I have preserved it pasted upon one of the boards of my original Journal at this time, and shall here insert it for the amusement of my readers:—

“M. Killingley's duty waits upon Mr. Boswell, is exceedingly obliged to him for this favour; whenever he comes this way, hopes for a continuance of the same. Would Mr. Boswell name the house to his extensive acquaintance, it would be a singular favour conferred on one who has it not in her power to make any other return but her most grateful thanks, and sincerest prayers for his happiness in time, and in a blessed eternity.

“Tuesday morning.”

From this meeting at Ashbourne I derived a considerable accession to my Johnsonian store. I communicated my original Journal to Sir William Forbes, in whom I have always placed deserved confidence; and what he wrote to me concerning it is so much to my credit as the biographer of Johnson, that my readers will, I hope, grant me their indulgence for here inserting it: “It is not once or twice going over it,” says Sir William, “that will satisfy me; for I find in it a high degree of instruction as well as entertain-

ral course of things gives man a right to expect. I think on it with great delight. I am not very apt to be delighted.”

“Lichfield, Oct. 22.—I am come, at last, to Lichfield, and am really glad that I have got away from a place where there was indeed no evil, but very little good. My visit to Stowhill has been paid. I have seen there a collection of misery. Mrs. Aston paralytic, Mrs. Walsley lame, Mrs. Hervey blind, and I think another lady deaf. Even such is life. I hope dear Mrs. Aston is a little better; it is, however, very little. She was, I believe, glad to see me; and to have anybody glad to see me is a great pleasure.” *

“Lichfield, Oct. 29.—Though after my last letter I might justly claim an interval of rest, yet I write again to tell you, that for this turn you will hear but once more from Lichfield. This day is Wednesday—on Saturday I shall write again, and on Monday I shall set out to seek adventures; for you know,—‘None but the brave desert the fair.’ On Monday we hope to see Birmingham, the seat of the mechanic arts; and I know not whether our next stage will be Oxford, the mansion of the liberal arts; or London, the residence of all the arts together. The chymists call the world *Academia Paracelsi*; my ambition is to be his fellow-student—to see the works of nature, and hear the lectures of truth. To London, therefore! London may, perhaps, fill me; and I hope to fill my part of London.”—*Letters to Mrs. Thrale.*

* “Mr. Johnson sends his compliments to the ladies at Stowhill, of whom he would have taken a more formal leave, but that he was willing to spare a ceremony which he hopes would have been no pleasure to them, and would have been painful to himself.”

ment; and I derive more benefit from Dr. Johnson's admirable discussions than I should be able to draw from his personal conversation; for I suppose there is not a man in the world to whom he discloses his sentiments so freely as to yourself."

I cannot omit a curious circumstance which occurred at Edensor-inn, close by Chatsworth, to survey the magnificence of which I had gone a considerable way out of my road to Scotland. The inn was then kept by a very jolly landlord, whose name, I think, was Malton. He happened to mention that "the celebrated Dr. Johnson had been in his house." I inquired *who* this Dr. Johnson was, that I might hear my host's notion of him. "Sir," said he, "Johnson, the great writer; *Oddity*, as they call him. He's the greatest writer in England; he writes for the ministry; he has a correspondence abroad, and lets them know what's going on."

My friend, who had a thorough dependence upon the authenticity of my relation without any *embellishment* as *falsehood* or *fiction* is too gently called, laughed a good deal at this representation of himself.

LETTER 303.

FROM MR. BOSWELL.

Edinburgh, Sept 29, 1777.

"MY DEAR SIR,—By the first post I inform you of my safe arrival at my own house, and that I had the comfort of finding my wife and children all in good health.

"When I look back upon our late interview, it appears to me to have answered expectation better than almost any scheme of happiness that I ever put in execution. My Journal is stored with wisdom and wit; and my memory is filled with the recollection of lively and affectionate feelings, which now, I think, yield me more satisfaction than at the time when they were first excited. I have experienced this upon other occasions. I shall be obliged to you if you will explain it to me; for it seems wonderful that pleasure should be more vivid at a distance than when near. I wish you may find yourself in a humour to do me this favour; but I flatter myself with no strong hope of it, for I have observed, that, unless upon very serious occasions, your letters to me are *not answers* to those which I write." (I then expressed much uneasiness that I had mentioned to him the name of the gentleman who had told me the story so much to his disadvantage, the truth of which he had completely refuted; for that my having done so might be interpreted as a breach of confidence, and offend one whose society I valued: therefore earnestly requesting that no notice might be taken of it to anybody till I should be in London. ~~and have~~ an opportunity to talk it over with the gentleman.)

LETTER 304.

TO MRS. ASTON.

"London, Nov. 20, 1777.

"DEAR MADAM,—Through Birmingham and Oxford I got without any difficulty or disaster to London, though not in so short a time as I expected, for I did not reach Oxford before the second day. I came home very much incommoded by obstructed respiration; but by vigorous methods am something better. I have since been at Brighthelmstone, and am now designing to settle.

"Different things, Madam, are fit for different people. It is fit for me to settle, and for you to move. I wish I could hear of you at Bath; but I am afraid that is hardly to be expected from your resolute inactivity. My next hope is that you will endeavour to grow well where you are. I cannot help thinking that I saw a visible amendment between the time when I left you to go to Ashbourne, and the time when I came back. I hope you will go on mending and mending, to which exercise and cheerfulness will very much contribute. Take care, therefore, dearest Madam, to be busy and cheerful.

"I have great confidence in the care and conversation of dear Mrs. Gastrell. It is very much the interest of all that know her that she should continue well, for she is one of few people that has the proper regard for those that are sick. She was so kind to me, that I hope I never shall forget it; and if it be troublesome for you to write, I shall hope that she will do me another act of kindness by answering this letter, for I beg that I may hear from you by some hand or another. I am, Madam, your, &c.,

SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 305.

TO MRS. LUCY PORTER.

"London, Nov. 20, 1777.

"DEAR LOVE,—You ordered me to write you word when I came home I have been for some days at Brighthelmstone, and came back on Tuesday night.

"You know that when I left you I was not well; I have taken physic very diligently, and am perceptibly better; so much better that I hope by care and perseverance to recover, and see you again from time to time.

"Mr. Nollekens, the statuary, has had my direction to send you a cast of my head. I will pay the carriage when we meet. Let me know how you like 't; and what the ladies of your rout say to it. I have heard different opinions. I cannot think where you can put it.

"I found everybody here well. Miss [Thrale] has a mind to be womanly, and her womanhood does not sit well upon her. Please to make my compliments to all the ladies and all the gentlemen to whom I owe them, that is, to a great part of the town. I am, dear Madam, your most humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 306.

TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"London, Nov. 20, 1777.

"DEAR SIR,—You will wonder, or you have wondered, why no letter has come from me. What you wrote at your return had in it such a strain of cowardly

caution as gave me no pleasure. I could not well do what you wished; I had no need to vex you with a refusal. I have seen [Mr. Beaucherk], and as to him have set all right, without any inconvenience, so far as I know, to you. Mrs. Thrale had forgot the story. You may now be at ease.

"And at ease I certainly wish you, for the kindness that you showed in coming so long a journey to see me. It was pity to keep you so long in pain, but, upon reviewing the matter, I do not see what I could have done better than I did. I hope you found at your return my dear enemy and all her little people quite well, and had no reason to repent of your journey. I think on it with great gratitude.

"I was not well when you left me at the doctor's and I grew worse; yet I staid on, and as Lichfield was very ill. Travelling, however, did not make me worse; and when I came to London, I complied with a summons to go to Brighthelmstone, where I saw Beaucherk, and staid three days.

"Our club has recommenced last Friday, but I was not there. Langton has another wench.¹ Mrs. Thrale is in hopes of a young brewer. They got by their trade last year a very large sum, and their expenses are proportionate. Mrs. Williams's health is very bad. And I have had for some time a very difficult and laborious respiration; but I am better by purges, abstinence, and other methods. I am yet, however, much behind-hand in my health and rest.

"Dr. Blair's sermons are now universally commended; but let him think that I had the honour of first finding and first praising his excellencies. I did not stay to add my voice to that of the public.

"My dear friend, let me thank you once more for your visit: you did me great honour, and I hope met with nothing that displeased you. I staid long at Ashbourne, not much pleased, yet awkward at departing. I then went to Lichfield, where I found my friend at Stowhill [Mrs. Aston] very dangerously diseased. Such is life. Let us try to pass it well, whatever it be, for there is surely something beyond it.

"Well, now, I hope all is well; write as soon as you can to, dear Sir, &c.,
"SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 307.

FROM MR. BOSWELL.

"Edinburgh, Nov. 29, 1777.

"MY DEAR SIR,—This day's post has at length relieved me from much uneasiness, by bringing me a letter from you. I was, indeed, doubly uneasy; on my own account and yours. I was very anxious to be secured against any bad consequences from my imprudence in mentioning the gentleman's name who had told me a story to your disadvantage; and as I could hardly suppose it possible that you would delay so long to make me easy, unless you were ill, I was not a little apprehensive about you. You must not be offended when I venture to tell you that you appear to me to have been too rigid upon this occasion. The '*cowardly caution which gave you no pleasure*,' was suggested

¹ A daughter born to him.

to me by a friend here, to whom I mentioned the strange story, and the detection of its falsity, as an instance how one may be deceived by what is apparently very good authority. But, as I am still persuaded, that as I might have obtained the truth without mentioning the gentleman's name, it was wrong in me to do it, I cannot see that you are just in blaming my caution. But if you were ever so just in your disapprobation, might you not have dealt more tenderly with me?

"I went to Auchinleck about the middle of October, and passed some time with my father very comfortably.

"I am engaged in a criminal prosecution against a country schoolmaster, for indecent behaviour to his female scholars. There is no statute against such abominable conduct; but it is punishable at common law. I shall be obliged to you for your assistance in this extraordinary trial. I ever am, &c.,

"JAMES BOSWELL."

About this time I wrote to Johnson, giving him an account of the decision of the negro cause, by the Court of Session, which by those who hold even the mildest and best regulated slavery in abomination (of which number I do not hesitate to declare that I am none) should be remembered with high respect, and to the credit of Scotland; for it went upon a much broader ground than the case of *Somerset*, which was decided in England;¹ being truly the general question, whether a perpetual obligation of service to one master in any mode should be sanctified by the law of a free country. A negro, then called *Joseph Knight*, a native of Africa, having been brought to Jamaica in the usual course of the slave trade, and purchased by a Scotch gentleman in that island, had attended his master to Scotland, where it was officiously suggested to him that he would be found entitled to his liberty without any limitation. He accordingly brought his action, in the course of which the advocates on both sides did themselves great honour. Mr. Maclaurin has had the praise of Johnson, for his argument² in favour of the negro, and Mr. Macconochie distinguished himself on the same side, by his inge-

¹ See State Trials, vol. xi. p. 338, and Mr. Hargrave's argument.

² The motto to it was happily chosen:—

"Quamvis ille niger, quamvis tu candidus esses."

cannot avoid mentioning a circumstance no less strange than true, that a brother advocate in considerable practice [Mr. Wright], but of whom it certainly cannot be said, *Ingenuas didicit fideliter artes*, asked Mr. Maclaurin, with a face of flippant assurance, "Are these ^{of} your own?"

unity and extraordinary research. Mr. Cullen, on the part of the master, discovered good information and sound reasoning; in which he was well supported by Mr. James Ferguson, remarkable for a manly understanding, and a knowledge both of books and of the world. But I cannot too highly praise the speech which Mr. Henry Dundas generously contributed to the cause of the sooty stranger. Mr. Dundas's Scottish accent, which has been so often in vain obtruded as an objection to his powerful abilities in parliament, was to his advantage to him in his own country. And I do declare, that upon this memorable question he impressed me, and I believe all his audience, with such feelings as were produced by some of the most eminent orations of antiquity. This testimony I liberally give to the excellence of an old friend, with whom it has been my lot to differ very widely upon many political topics: yet I persuade myself without malice. A great majority of the lords of session decided for the negro. But four of their number, the Lord President [Dundas], Lord Eliock [Veitch], Lord Monboddo [Burnett], and Lord Covington [Lockhart], resolutely maintained the lawfulness of a *status*, which has been acknowledged in all ages and countries, and that when freedom flourished, as in old Greece and Rome.

LETTER 308.

TO MRS. GASTREL.

"Bolt Court, Dec. 28, 1777.

"DEAR MADAM,—Your long silence portended no good; yet I hope the danger is not so near as our anxiety sometimes makes us fear. Winter is indeed to all those that any distemper has enfeebled a very troublesome time; but care and caution may pass safely through it, and from spring and summer some relief is always to be hoped. When I came hither I fell to taking care of myself, and by physic and opium had the constriction that obstructed my breath very suddenly removed. My nights still continue very laborious and tedious, but they do not grow worse.

"I do not ask you, dear Madam, to take care of Mrs. Aston; I know how little you want any such exhortations; but I earnestly entreat her to take care of herself. Many lives are prolonged by a diligent attention to little things, and I am far from thinking it unlikely that she may grow better by degrees. However, it is her duty to try, and when we do our duty we have reason to hope. I am, dear Madam, &c.,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 309.

TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"Dec. 27, 1777.

"DEAR SIR,—This is the time of the year in which all express their good wishes to their friends, and I send mine to you and your family. May your lives be long, happy, and good. I have been much out of order, but, I hope, do not grow worse.

"The crime of the schoolmaster whom you are engaged to prosecute is very great, and may be suspected to be too common. In our law it would be a breach of the peace and a misdemeanour: that is, a kind of indefinite crime, not capital, but punishable at the discretion of the court. You cannot want matter: all that needs to be said will easily occur.

"Mr. Shaw, the author of the Gaelic Grammar, desires me to make a request for him to Lord Eglintoune, that he may be appointed chaplain to one of the new-raised regiments.

"All our friends are as they were; little has happened to them of either good or bad. Mrs. Thrale ran a great black hair-dressing pin into her eye; but by great evacuation she kept it from inflaming, and it is almost well. Miss Reynolds has been out of order, but is better. Mrs. Williams is in a very poor state of health.

"If I should write on, I should, perhaps, write only complaints, and therefore I will content myself with telling you, that I love to think on you, and to hear from you; and that I am, dear Sir, yours faithfully,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 310.

FROM MR. BOSWELL.

"Edinburgh, Jan. 8, 1778.

"DEAR SIR,—Your congratulations upon a new year are mixed with complaint: mine must be so too. My wife has for some time been ill, having been confined to the house these three months by a severe cold, attended with alarming symptoms."

(Here I gave a particular account of the distress which the person, upon every account most dear to me, suffered; and of the dismal state of apprehension in which I now was: adding, that I never stood more in need of his consoling philosophy.)

"Did you ever look at a book written by Wilson, a Scotchman, under the Latin name of *Volusenus*, according to the custom of literary men at a certain period? It is entitled "*De Animi Tranquillitate*." I earnestly desire tranquillity. *Bona res quies*; but I fear I shall never attain it: for, when unoccupied, I grow gloomy, and occupation agitates me to feverishness. I am, dear Sir, &c.,

JAMES BOSWELL."

¹ Florence Wilson, born at Elgin, died near Lyons in 1547.

LETTER 311.

TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

Jan. 24, 1778.

"DEAR SIR,—To a letter so interesting as your last, it is proper to return some answer, however little I may be disposed to write. Your alarm at your lady's illness was reasonable, and not disproportionate to the appearance of the disorder. I hope your physical friend's conjecture is not verified, and all fear of a consumption at an end: a little care and exercise will then restore her. London is a good air for ladies; and if you bring her hither, I will do for her what she did for me—I will retire from my apartments for her accommodation. Behave kindly to her, and keep her cheerful.

"You always seem to call for tenderness. Know then, that in the first month of the present year I very highly esteem and very cordially love you. I hope to tell you this at the beginning of every year as long as we live; and why should we trouble ourselves to tell or hear it oftener? Tell Veronica, Euphemia, and Alexander, that I wish them, as well as their parents, many happy years.

"You have ended the negro's cause much to my mind. Lord Auchinleck and dear Lord Hailes were on the side of liberty. Lord Hailes's name reproaches me; but if he saw my languid neglect of my own affairs, he would rather pity than resent my neglect of his. I hope to mend, *ut et mihi vivam et amicis*. I am, dear Sir, yours affectionately,

"SAM. JOHNSON.

"My service to my fellow-traveller, Joseph."

Johnson maintained a long and intimate friendship with Mr. Welch, who succeeded the celebrated Henry Fielding as one of his majesty's justices of the peace for Westminster; kept a regular office for the police of that great district; and discharged his important trust, for many years, faithfully and ably. Johnson, who had an eager and unceasing curiosity to know human life in all its variety, told me, that he attended Mr. Welch in his office for a whole winter, to hear the examinations of the culprits; but that he found an almost uniform tenor of misfortune, wretchedness, and profligacy. Mr. Welch's health being impaired, he was advised to try the effect of a warm climate; and Johnson, by his interest with Mr. Chamier, procured him leave of absence to go to Italy, and a promise that the pension or salary of two hundred pounds a year, which government allowed him, should not be discontinued. Mr. Welch accordingly went abroad, accompanied by his daughter Anne, a young lady of uncommon talents and literature.

LETTER 312

TO SAUNDERS WELCH, ESQ.

AT THE ENGLISH COFFEE-HOUSE, ROME.

"Feb. 3, 1778.

"DEAR SIR,—To have suffered one of my best and dearest friends to pass almost two years in foreign countries without a letter, has a very shameful appearance of inattention. But the truth is, that there was no particular time, in which I had anything particular to say; and general expressions of good will, I hope, our long friendship is grown too solid to want.

"Of public affairs you have information from the newspapers wherever you go, for the English keep no secret; and of other things Mrs. Nollekens informs you. My intelligence could, therefore, be of no use; and Miss Nancy's letters made it unnecessary to write to you for information; I was likewise for some time out of humour, to find that motion and nearer approaches to the sun did not restore your health so fast as I expected. Of your health the accounts have lately been more pleasing; and I have the gratification of imagining to myself a length of years which I hope you have gained, and of which the enjoyment will be improved by a vast accession of images and observations which your journeys and various residence have enabled you to make and accumulate. You have travelled with this felicity, almost peculiar to yourself, that your companion is not to part from you at your journey's end; but you are to live on together, to help each other's recollections, and to supply each other's omissions. The world has few greater pleasures than that which two friends enjoy, in tracing back, at some distant time, those transactions and events through which they have passed together. One of the old man's miseries is, that he cannot easily find a companion able to partake with him of the past. You and your fellow-traveller have this comfort in store, that your conversation will be not easily exhausted; one will always be glad to say what the other will always be willing to hear.

"That you may enjoy this pleasure long, your health must have your constant attention. I suppose you propose to return this year. There is no need of haste: do not come hither before the height of summer, that you may fall gradually into the inconveniencies of your native clime. July seems to be the proper month. August and September will prepare you for the winter. After having travelled so far to find health, you must take care not to lose it at home; and I hope a little care will effectually preserve it.

"Miss Nancy has doubtless kept a constant and copious journal. She must not expect to be welcome when she returns without a great mass of information. Let her review her journal often, and set down what she finds herself to have omitted, that she may trust to memory as little as possible, for memory is soon confused by a quick succession of things; and she will grow every day less confident of the truth of her own narratives, unless she can recur to some written memorials. If she has satisfied herself with hints, instead of full representations, let her supply the deficiencies now while her memory is yet

fresh, and while her father's memory may help her. If she observes this direction, she will not have travelled in vain ; for she will bring home a book with which she may entertain herself to the end of life. If it were not now too late, I would advise her to note the impression which the first sight of any thing new and wonderful made upon her mind. Let her now set her thoughts down as she can recollect them ; for faint, as they may already be, they will grow every day fainter.

"Perhaps I do not flatter myself unreasonably when I imagine that you may wish to know something of me. I can gratify your benevolence with no account of health. The hand of time, or of disease, is very heavy upon me. I pass restless and uneasy nights, harassed with convulsions of my breast, and flatulencies at my stomach ; and restless nights make heavy days. But nothing will be mended by complaints, and therefore I will make an end. When we meet, we will try to forget our cares and our maladies, and contribute, as we can, to the cheerfulness of each other. If I had gone with you, I believe I should have been better ; but I do not know that it was in my power. I am, dear Sir, your most humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

This letter, while it gives admirable advice how to travel to the best advantage, and will therefore be of very general use, is another eminent proof of Johnson's warm and affectionate heart.

LETTER 313.

TO MRS. LUCY PORTER.

"Feb. 19, 1778.

"DEAR MADAM,—I have several little things to mention which I have hitherto neglected. You judged rightly in thinking that the bust² would not please. It is condemned by Mrs. Thrale, Mrs. Reynolds, and Mrs. Garrick ; so that your disapprobation is not singular.

"These things have never cost me anything, so that I do not much know the price. My bust was made for the Exhibition, and shown for honour of the artist, who is a man of reputation above any of the other sculptors. To be modelled in clay costs, I believe, twenty guineas ; but the casts when the model is made, are of no great price ; whether a guinea, or two guineas, I cannot tell.

"When you complained for want of oysters, I ordered you a barrel weekly for a month ; you sent me word sooner that you had enough, but I did not

¹ The friendship between Mr. Welch and him was unbroken. Mr. Welch died not many months before him, and bequeathed him five guineas for a ring, which Johnson received with tenderness, as a kind memorial. His regard was constant for his friend Mr. Welch's daughters ; of whom Jane is married to Mr. Nollekens, the statuary, whose merit is too well known to require any praise from me.—B.

² This bust, and the walking-stick mentioned by Boswell, are now in the possession of Mrs. Pearson, of Hill Ridware, near Lichfield.—HARWOOD.

countermand the rest. If you could not eat them, could you not give them away? When you want anything send me word. I am very poorly, and have very restless and oppressive nights, but always hope for better. Pray for me. I am, &c.

SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 314.

FROM MR. BOSWELL.

"Edinburgh, Feb. 26, 1778.

"MY DEAR SIR,—Why I have delayed, for near a month, to thank you for your last affectionate letter, I cannot say; for my mind has been in better health these three weeks than for some years past. I believe I have evaded till I could send you a copy of Lord Hailes's opinion on the negro's cause, which he wishes you to read, and correct any errors that there may be in the language; for, says he, 'we live in a critical, though not a learned age; and I seek to screen myself under the shield of Ajax.' I communicated to him your apology for keeping the sheets of his 'Annals' so long. He says 'I am sorry to see that Dr. Johnson is in a state of languor. Why should a sober Christian, neither an enthusiast nor a fanatic, be very merry or very sad?' I envy his lordship's comfortable constitution; but well do I know that languor and dejection will afflict the best, however excellent their principles.—I am in possession of Lord Hailes's opinion in his own hand-writing, and have had it for some time. My excuse then for procrastination must be, that I wanted to have it copied; and I have now put that off so long that it will be better to bring it with me than send it, as I shall probably get you to look at it sooner when I solicit you in person.

"My wife, who is, I thank God, a good deal better, is much obliged to you for your very polite and courteous offer of your apartment; but if she goes to London, it will be best for her to have lodgings in the more airy vicinity of Hyde-park. I, however, doubt much if I shall be able to prevail with her to accompany me to the metropolis; for she is so different from you and me, that she dislikes travelling; and she is so anxious about her children, that she thinks she should be unhappy if at a distance from them. She therefore wishes rather to go to some country place in Scotland, where she can have them with her.

"I purpose being in London about the 20th of next month, as I think it creditable to appear in the house of lords as one of Douglas's counsel in the great and last competition between Duke Hamilton and him.

"I am sorry poor Mrs. Williams is so ill: though her temper is unpleasant, she has always been polite and obliging to me. I wish many happy years to good Mr. Levett, who, I suppose, holds his usual place at your breakfast-table.¹ I ever am, dear Sir, your affectionate servant,

"JAMES BOSWELL."

¹ Dr. Percy, the Bishop of Dromore, humorously observed, that Levett used to breakfast on the crust of a roll, which Johnson, after tearing out the crum for himself, *threw* to his humble friend.—B. Perhaps the word *threw* is here too strong. Dr. Johnson never treated Levett

LETTER 315.

FROM MR. BOSWELL.

"Edinburgh, Feb. 28, 1778.

"MY DEAR SIR,—You are at present busy amongst the English poets, preparing, for the public instruction and entertainment, prefaces biographical and critical. It will not, therefore, be out of season to appeal to you for the decision of a controversy which has arisen between a lady and me concerning a passage in Parnell. That poet tells us, that his hermit quitted his cell.

'——to know the world by sight,
To find if *books* or *swains* report it right;
(For yet by *swains alone* the world he *knew*,
Whose feet came wand'ring o'er the nightly dew.)

I maintain, that there is an inconsistency here; for as the hermit's notions of the world were formed from the reports of both *books* and *swains*, he could not justly be said to know by *swains alone*. Be pleased to judge between us, and let us have your reasons.¹

"What do you say to 'Taxation no Tyranny,' now, after Lord North's declaration, or confession, or whatever else his conciliatory speech should be called? I never differed from you in politics but upon two points—the Middlesex election, and the taxation of the Americans by the British houses of representatives. There is a *charm* in the word *parliament*, so I avoid it. As I am a steady and a warm Tory, I regret that the king does not see it to be better for him to receive constitutional supplies from his American subjects by the voice of their own assemblies, where his royal person is represented, than through the medium of his British subjects. I am persuaded that the power of the crown, which I wish to increase, would be greater when in contact with all its dominions, than if 'the rays of regal bounty'² were 'to shine' upon America through that dense and troubled body, a modern British parliament. But, enough of this subject; for your angry voice at Ashbourne upon it still sounds awful 'in my mind's ears.'—I ever am, &c.

"JAMES BOSWELL."

LETTER 316.

TO MRS. MONTAGU.

"March 5, 1778.

"MADAM,—And so you are alarmed, naughty lady? You might know that I was ill enough when Mr. Thrall brought you my excuse. Could you think that I missed the honour of being at (your) table for any slight reason? But

with contempt; it is clear indeed, from various circumstances, that he had great kindness for him. I have often seen Johnson at breakfast, accompanied, or rather attended, by Levett, who had always the management of the tea-kettle.—M. Sir J. Hawkins states, that "Dr. Johnson frequently observed that Levett was indebted to him for nothing more than house-room, his share in a penny loaf at breakfast, and now and then a dinner on a Sunday."—O.

¹ See this subject discussed in a subsequent page, under May 8, 1779.—M.

² Alluding to a line in his "Vanity of Human Wishes," describing Cardinal Wolsey in a state of elevation:—

"Through him the rays of regal bounty shine."

you (have) too many to miss any one of us, and I am (proud) to be remembered at last. I am much better. A little cough (still) remains which will not confine me. To houses (like yours) of great delicacy I am not willing to bring it.

"Now, dear Madam, we must talk of business. Poor Davies, the bankrupt bookseller, is soliciting his friends to collect a small sum for the repurchase of part of his household stuff. Several of them gave him five guineas. It would be an honour to him to owe part of his relief to Mrs. Montagu.

"Let me thank you, Madam, once more for your inquiry; you have, perhaps, among your numerous train not one that values a kind word or a kind look more than, Madam, yours, &c.

"SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 317.

TO MRS. MONTAGU.

"March 6, 1778.

"MADAM,—I hope Davies,¹ who does not want wit, does not want gratitude, and then he will be almost as thankful for the bill as I am for the letter that enclosed it.

"If I do not lose, what I hope always to keep, my reverence for transcendent merit, I shall continue to be with unalterable fidelity, Madam, yours &c.

"SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 318.

FROM MR. BOSWELL.

"Edinburgh, March 12, 1778.

"MY DEAR SIR,—The alarm of your late illness distressed me but a few hours; for on the evening of the day that it reached me, I found it contradicted in 'The London Chronicle,' which I could depend upon as authentic concerning you, Mr Strahan being the printer of it. I did not see the paper in which 'the approaching extinction of a bright luminary' was announced. Sir William Forbes told me of it; and he says he saw me so uneasy, that he did not give me the report in such strong terms as he read it. He afterwards sent me a letter from Mr. Langton to him, which relieved me much. I am, however, not quite easy, as I have not heard from you; and now I shall not have that comfort before I see you, for I set out for London to-morrow before the post comes in. I hope to be with you on Wednesday morning: and I ever am, with the highest veneration, my dear Sir, your most obliged, faithful, and affectionate, humble servant,

JAMES BOSWELL."

¹ Tom Davies, the bankrupt bookseller, in whose behalf he more than once appealed to the charity of Mrs. Montagu.—C.

CHAPTER XVII.

1778.

Remarks of Benbow—Tom Davies—Counsel at the Bar of the House of Commons—Thomas à Kempis—Use of a Diary—Strict Adherence to Truth—Ghosts—John Wesley—Alcibiades's Dog—Emigration—Parliamentary Eloquence—Place Hunters—Irish Language—Thicknesse's "Travels"—Honesty—Temptation—Dr. Kennedy's Tragedy—Shooting a Highwayman—Mr. Dunning—Contentment—Laxity of Narration—Mrs. Montagu—Harris of Salisbury—Definition—Wine drinking—Pleasure—Goldsmith—Charles the Fifth—Best English Sermons—"Seeing Scotland"—Absenteeism—Delany's "Observations on Swift."

ON Wednesday, March 18, I arrived in London, and was informed by good Mr. Francis, that his master was better, and was gone to Mr. Thrale's at Streatham, to which place I wrote to him, begging to know when he would be in town. He was not expected for some time; but next day, having called on Dr. Taylor, in Dean's yard, Westminster, I found him there, and was told he had come to town for a few hours. He met me with his usual kindness, but instantly returned to the writing of something on which he was employed when I came in, and on which he seemed much intent. Finding him thus engaged, I made my visit very short, and had no more of his conversation, except his expressing a serious regret that a friend of ours [Mr. Langton] was living at too much expense, considering how poor an appearance he made: "If," said he, "a man has splendour from his expense, if he spends his money in pride or in pleasure, he has value; but if he lets others spend it for him, which is most commonly the case, he has no advantage from it."

On Friday, March 20, I found him at his own house, sitting with Mrs. Williams, and was informed that the room formerly allotted to me was now appropriated to a charitable purpose; Mrs. Desmoulins,¹ and, I think, her daughter, and a Miss Carmichael, being all lodging in it. Such was his humanity, and such his generosity,

¹ Daughter of Dr. Swinfen, Johnson's god-father, and widow of Mr. Desmoulins, a writing master.

that Mrs. Desmoulins herself told me he allowed her half a guinea a week. Let it be remembered, that this was above a twelfth part of his pension.¹

His liberality, indeed, was at all periods of his life very remarkable. Mr. Howard, of Lichfield, at whose father's house Johnson had in his early years been kindly received, told me, that when he was a boy at the Charterhouse, his father wrote to him to go and pay a visit to Mr. Samuel Johnson, which he accordingly did, and found him in an upper room, of poor appearance. Johnson received him with much courteousness, and talked a great deal to him, as to a schoolboy, of the course of his education, and other particulars. When he afterwards came to know and understand the high character of this great man, he recollected his condescension with wonder. He added, that when he was going away, Mr. Johnson presented him with half a guinea ; and this, said Mr. Howard, was at a time when he probably had not another.

We retired from Mrs. Williams to another room. Tom Davies soon after joined us. He had now unfortunately failed in his circumstances, and was much indebted to Dr. Johnson's kindness for obtaining for him many alleviations of his distress. After he went away, Johnson blamed his folly in quitting the stage, by which he and his wife got five hundred pounds a year. I said, I believed it was owing to Churchill's attack upon him, "He mouths a sentence as curs mouth a bone." JOHNSON. "I believe so, too, Sir. But what a man is he who is to be driven from the stage by a line ? Another line would have driven him from his shop !"

I told him that I was engaged as counsel at the bar of the house of commons to oppose a road-bill in the county of Stirling, and asked him what mode he would advise me to follow in addressing such an audience. JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, you must provide yourself with a

¹ The dissensions that the many odd inhabitants of his house chose to live constantly in, distressed and mortified him exceedingly. He really was sometimes afraid of going home, because he was sure to be met at the door with numberless complaints ; and he used to lament pathetically to me, and to Mr. Sastres, the Italian master, who was much his favourite, that they made his life miserable from the impossibility he found of making theirs happy, when every favour he bestowed on one was wormwood to the rest. If, however, I ventured to blame their ingratitude and condemn their conduct, he would instantly set about softening the one and justifying the other ; and finished commonly by telling me, that I knew not how to make allowances for situations that I never experienced. — PIZZI.

good deal of extraneous matter, which you are to produce occasionally, so as to fill up the time ; for you must consider, that they do not listen much. If you begin with the strength of your cause, it may be lost before they begin to listen. When you catch a moment of attention, press the merits of the question upon them." He said, as to one point of the merits, that he thought "it would be a wrong thing to deprive the small landholders of the privilege of assessing themselves for making and repairing the high roads : *it was destroying a certain portion of liberty without a good reason, which was always a bad thing.*" When I mentioned this observation next day to Mr. Wilkes, he pleasantly said, "What ! does *he* talk of liberty ? *Liberty* is as ridiculous in *his* mouth as *religion* in *mine.*" Mr. Wilkes's advice as to the best mode of speaking at the bar of the house of commons was not more respectful towards the senate than that of Dr. Johnson. "Be as impudent as you can, as merry as you can, and say whatever comes uppermost. Jack Lee¹ is the best heard there of any counsel : and he is the most impudent dog, and always abusing us."

In my interview with Dr. Johnson this evening, I was quite easy, quite as his companion ; upon which I find in my journal the following reflection : "So ready is my mind to suggest matter for dissatisfaction, that I felt a sort of regret that I was so easy. I missed that awful reverence with which I used to contemplate Mr. SAMUEL JOHNSON, in the complex magnitude of his literary, moral, and religious character. I have a wonderful superstitious love of *mystery* ; when, perhaps, the truth is, that it is owing to the cloudy darkness of my own mind. I should be glad that I am more advanced in my progress of being, so that I can view Dr. Johnson with a steadier and clearer eye. My dissatisfaction to-night was foolish. Would it not be foolish to regret that we shall have less mystery in a future state ? That 'we now see in a glass darkly,' but shall 'then see face to face ?'" This reflection, which I thus freely communicate, will be valued by the thinking part of my readers, who may have themselves experienced a similar state of mind.

He returned next day to Streatham, to Mr. Thrale's ; where, as

¹ Mr. Lee, afterwards Solicitor-General in the Rockingham administration.

Mr. Strahan once complained to me, "he was in a great measure absorbed from the society of his old friends." I was kept in London by business, and wrote to him on the 27th, that "a separation from him for a week, when we were so near, was equal to a separation for a year, when we were at four hundred miles distance." I went to Streatham on Monday, March 30. Before he appeared, Mrs. Thrale made a very characteristical remark; "I do not know for certain what will please Dr. Johnson: but I know for certain that it will displease him to praise anything, even what he likes extravagantly."

At dinner he laughed at querulous declamations against the age, on account of luxury,—increase of London,—scarcity of provisions, and other such topics. "Houses," said he, "will be built till rents fall; and corn is more plentiful now than ever it was."

I had before dinner repeated a ridiculous story told me by an old man, who had been a passenger with me in the stage-coach to-day, Mrs. Thrale, having taken occasion to allude to it in talking to me, called it, "The story told you by the old *woman*." "Now, Madam," said I, "give me leave to catch you in the fact: it was not an old *woman*, but an old *man*, whom I mentioned as having told me this." I presumed to take an opportunity, in the presence of Johnson, of showing this lively lady how ready she was, unintentionally, to deviate from exact authenticity of narration.

Thomas à Kempis (he observed) must be a good book, as the world has opened its arms to receive it. It is said to have been printed, in one language or other, as many times as there have been months since it first came out.¹ I always was struck with this sentence in it: "Be not angry that you cannot make others as you wish them to be, since you cannot make yourself as you wish to be."²

He said, "I was angry with Hurd about Cowley for having published a selection of his works: but, upon better consideration, I think there is no impropriety in a man's publishing as much as he

¹ The first edition was in 1492. Between that period and 1792, according to this account there were 8,800 editions. But this is very improbable.—M.

² The original passage is: "Si non potes te talem facere, qualem vis, quomodo poteris alium ad tuum habere beneplacitum?" De Imit. Christ. lib. i. c. xvi.—J. BOSWELL, Jun.

choses of any author, if he does not put the rest out of the way. A man, for instance, may print the Odes of Horace alone." He seemed to be in a more indulgent humour than when this subject was discussed between him and Mr. Murphy.

When we were at tea and coffee, there came in Lord Trimlestown, in whose family was an ancient Irish peerage, but it suffered by taking the generous side in the troubles of the last century.¹ He was a man of pleasing conversation, and was accompanied by a young gentleman, his son.

I mentioned that I had in my possession the Life of Sir Robert Sibbald, the celebrated Scottish antiquary, and founder of the royal college of physicians at Edinburgh, in the original manuscript in his own handwriting; and that it was, I believed, the most natural and candid account of himself that ever was given by any man. As an instance, he tells that the Duke of Perth, then chancellor of Scotland, pressed him very much to come over to the Roman Catholic faith; that he resisted all his grace's arguments for a considerable time, till one day he felt himself, as it were, instantaneously convinced, and with tears in his eyes ran into the duke's arms, and embraced the ancient religion; that he continued very steady in it for some time, and accompanied his grace to London one winter, and lived in his household; that there he found the rigid fasting prescribed by the church very severe upon him; that this disposed him to re-consider the controversy; and having then seen that he was in the wrong, he returned to Protestantism. I talked of some time or other publishing this curious life. MRS. THRALE. "I think you had as well let alone that publication. To discover such weakness exposes a man when he is gone." JOHNSON. "Nay, it is an honest picture of human nature. How often are the primary motives of our greatest actions as small as Sibbald's for his re-conversion!" MRS. THRALE. "But may they not as well be forgotten?" JOHNSON. "No, Madam; a man loves to review his own mind. That is the use of a diary or journal." LORD TRIMLESTOWN. "True, Sir. As the ladies love to see themselves in a glass, so a man likes to see

¹ Since this was written, the attainder has been reversed; and Nicholas Barnewall is now a peer of Ireland with this title. The person mentioned in the text had studied physic, and preached *gratis* to the poor. Hence arose the subsequent conversation.—M.

nimself in his journal." BOSWELL. "A very pretty allusion." JOHNSON. "Yes, indeed." BOSWELL. "And as a lady adjusts her dress before a mirror, a man adjusts his character by looking at his journal." I next year found the very same thought in Atterbury's "Funeral Sermon on Lady Cutts;" where, having mentioned her Diary, he says, "In this glass she every day dressed her mind." This is a proof of coincidence, and not of plagiarism; for I had never read that sermon before.

Next morning, while we were at breakfast, Johnson gave a very earnest recommendation of what he himself practised with the utmost conscientiousness: I mean a strict attention to truth even in the most minute particulars. "Accustom your children," said he, "constantly to this: if a thing happened at one window, and they, when relating it, say that it happened at another, do not let it pass, but instantly check them: you do not know where deviation from truth will end." BOSWELL. "It may come to the door: and when once an account is at all varied in one circumstance, it may by degrees be varied so as to be totally different from what really happened." Our lively hostess, whose fancy was impatient of the rein, fidgeted at this, and ventured to say, "Nay, this is too much. If Dr. Johnson should forbid me to drink tea, I would comply, as I should feel the restraint only twice a day; but little variations in narrative must happen a thousand times a day, if one is not perpetually watching." JOHNSON. "Well, Madam, and you *ought* to be perpetually watching. It is more from carelessness about truth, than from intentional lying, that there is so much falsehood in the world."

In his review of Dr. Warton's "Essay on the Writings and Genius of Pope," Johnson has given the following salutary caution upon this subject: "Nothing but experience could evince the frequency of false information, or enable any man to conceive that so many groundless reports should be propagated as every man of eminence may hear of himself. Some men relate what they think as what they know; some men of confused memories and habitual inaccuracy ascribe to one man what belongs to another; and some talk on without thought or care. A few men are sufficient to broach falsehoods, which are afterwards innocently diffused by successive

relaters.”¹ Had he lived to read what Sir John Hawkins and Mrs. Piozzi have related concerning himself, how much would he have found his observation illustrated! He was, indeed, so much impressed with the prevalence of falsehood, voluntary or unintentional, that I never knew any person, who, upon hearing an extraordinary circumstance told, discovered more of the *incredulus odi*. He would say, with a significant look and decisive tone, “It is not so. Do not tell this again.”² He inculcated upon all his friends the importance of perpetual vigilance against the slightest degrees of falsehood; the effect of which, as Sir Joshua Reynolds observed to me, has been, that all who were of his *school* are distinguished for a love of truth and accuracy, which they would not have possessed in the same degree if they had not been acquainted with Johnson.

Talking of ghosts, he said, “It is wonderful that five thousand years have now elapsed since the creation of the world, and still it is undecided whether or not there has ever been an instance of the spirit of any person appearing after death. All argument is against it; but all belief is for it.”

He said, “John Wesley’s conversation is good, but he is never at leisure. He is always obliged to go at a certain hour. This is very disagreeable to a man who loves to fold his legs and have out his talk, as I do.”

On Friday, April 3, I dined with him in London, in a company³ where were present several eminent men, whom I shall not name, but distinguish their parts in the conversation by different letters.

¹ Literary Magazine, 1756, p. 87.

² The following plausible but over-prudent counsel on this subject is given by an Italian writer, quoted by Rhedi “*De generatione insectarum*,” with the epithet of “*divinus poeta*.”

“*Sempre à quel ver ch’ a faccia di menzogna
Dee l’ uom chiudere le labbra quanto ei puote;
Però ch’è senza colpa fa vergogna.*”

³ THE CLUB.—This seems to be the only instance in which Mr. Boswell has ventured to give in any detail the conversation of that society; and we see that on this occasion he has not mentioned the names, but has disguised the parties under what look like initials. All these letters, however,—even with the names of the company before us,—it is not easy to appropriate. It appears by the books of the Club, as Mr. Hatchet informs me, that the company on that evening consisted of Dr. Johnson, president, Mr. Burke, Mr. Boswell, Dr. George Fordyce, Mr. Gibbon, Dr. Johnson (*again named*), Sir Joshua Reynolds, Lord Upper Ossory, and Mr. R. B. Sheridan. In Mr. Boswell’s account, the initial E. no doubt stands for *Edmund Burke*; F., in allusion to his family name of *Fitzpatrick*, probably means Lord Upper Ossory; but the appropriation of the other letters is very difficult.—C.

F. "I have been looking at this famous antique marble dog of Mr. Jennings,¹ valued at a thousand guineas, said to be the Alcibiades' dog." JOHNSON. "His tail then must be docked. That was the mark of Alcibiades' dog." E. "A thousand guineas! The representation of no animal whatever is worth so much. At this rate, a dead dog would, indeed, be better than a living lion." JOHNSON. "Sir, it is not the worth of the thing, but of the skill in forming it, which is so highly estimated. Everything that enlarges the sphere of human powers, that shows man he can do what he thought he could not do, is valuable. The first man who balanced a straw upon his nose; Johnson, who rode upon three horses at a time; in short, all such men deserve the applause of mankind, not on account of the use of what they did, but of the dexterity which they exhibited." BOSWELL. "Yet a misapplication of time and assiduity is not to be encouraged. Addison, in one of his 'Spectators,' commends the judgment of a king, who, as a suitable reward to a man that by long perseverance had attained to the art of throwing a barley-corn through the eye of a needle, gave him a bushel of barley." JOHNSON. "He must have been a king of Scotland, where barley is scarce." F. "One of the most remarkable antique figures of an animal is the boar at Florence." JOHNSON. "The first boar that is well made in marble should be preserved as a wonder. When men arrive at a facility of making boars well, then the workmanship is not of such value; but they should, however, be preserved as examples, and as a greater security for the restoration of the art, should it be lost."

E. "We hear prodigious complaints at present of emigration. I am convinced that emigration makes a country more populous." J. "That sounds very much like a paradox." E. "Exportation of men, like exportation of all other commodities, makes more be produced." JOHNSON. "But there would be more people were there not emigration, provided there were food for more." E. "No; leave a few breeders, and you'll have more people than if there were no emigration." JOHNSON. "Nay, Sir, it is plain there will be more people, if there are more breeders. Thirty cows in good pasture,

¹ This sculpture was at this date an object of curiosity in London. See *Ann. Reg.* April 4, 1778, p. 174, where it is stated to have been sold for a thousand guineas.—C.

will produce more calves than ten cows, provided they have good bulls." E. "There are bulls enough in Ireland." JOHNSON. (smiling.) "So, Sir, I should think from your argument." BOSWELL. "You said exportation of men, like exportation of other commodities, makes more be produced. But a bounty is given to encourage the exportation of corn, and no bounty is given for the exportation of men; though, indeed, those who go, gain by it." R. "But the bounty on the exportation of corn is paid at home." E. "That's the same thing." JOHNSON. "No, Sir." R. "A man who stays at home gains nothing by his neighbour's emigrating." BOSWELL. "I can understand that emigration may be the cause that more people may be produced in a country; but the country will not therefore be the more populous; for the people issue from it. It can only be said there is a flow of people. It is an encouragement to have children, to know that they can get a living by emigration." R. "Yes, if there were an emigration of children under six years of age. But they don't emigrate till they could earn their livelihood in some way at home." C. "It is remarkable that the most unhealthy countries, where there are the most destructive diseases, such as Egypt and Bengal, are the most populous." JOHNSON. "Countries which are the most populous have the most destructive diseases. *That* is the true state of the proposition." C. "Holland is very unhealthy, yet it is exceedingly populous." JOHNSON. "I know not that Holland is unhealthy. But its populousness is owing to an influx of people from all other countries. Disease cannot be the cause of populousness; for it not only carries off a great proportion of the people; but those who are left are weakened, and unfit for the purposes of increase."

R. "Mr. E., I don't mean to flatter, but when posterity reads one of your speeches in parliament, it will be difficult to believe that you took so much pains, knowing with certainty that it could produce no effect, that not one vote would be gained by it." E. "Waiving your compliment to me, I shall say, in general, that it is very well worth while for a man to take pains to speak well in parliament. A man who has vanity, speaks to display his talents; and if a man speaks well, he gradually establishes a certain reputation and consequence in the general opinion, which sooner or later

will have its political reward. Besides, though not one vote is gained, a good speech has its effect. Though, an act which has been ably opposed passes into a law, yet in its progress it is modelled, it is softened in such a manner, that we see plainly the minister has been told, that the members attached to him are so sensible of its injustice or absurdity from what they have heard, that it must be altered." JOHNSON. "And, Sir, there is a gratification of pride. Though we cannot out-vote them, we will out-argue them. They shall not do wrong, without its being shown both to themselves and to the world." E. "The house of commons is a mixed body. (I except the minority, which I hold to be pure (smiling), but I take the whole house.) It is a mass by no means pure; but neither is it wholly corrupt, though there is a large proportion of corruption in it. There are many members who generally go with the minister, who will not go all lengths. There are many honest well-meaning country gentlemen who are in parliament only to keep up the consequence of their families. Upon most of these a good speech will have influence." JOHNSON. "We are all more or less governed by interest. But interest will not make us do everything. In a case which admits of doubt, we try to think on the side which is for our interest, and generally bring ourselves to act accordingly. But the subject must admit of diversity of colouring; it must receive a colour on that side. In the house of commons there are members enough who will not vote what is grossly unjust or absurd. No, Sir; there must always be right enough, or appearance of right, to keep wrong in countenance." BOSWELL. "There is surely always a majority in parliament who have places, or who want to have them, and who therefore will be generally ready to support government, without requiring any pretext." E. "True, Sir; that majority will always follow

‘Quo clamor vocat et turba faventium.’”

BOSWELL. "Well now, let us take the common phrase, Place-hunters. I thought they had hunted without regard to anything, just as their huntsman, the minister, leads, looking only to the prey." 3

¹ Lord Bolingbroke, who, however detestable as a metaphysician, must be allowed to have had admirable talents as a political writer, thus describes the house of commons in his ‘Letter to Sir William Wyndham;’—“You know the nature of that assembly: they grow, like

J. "But taking your metaphor, you know that in hunting there are few so desperately keen as follow without reserve. Some do not choose to leap ditches and hedges and risk their necks, or gallop over steeps, or even to dirty themselves in bogs and mire." BOSWELL. "I am glad there are some good, quiet, moderate political hunters." E. "I believe in any body of men in England I should have been in the minority; I have always been in the minority." P. "The house of commons resembles a private company. How seldom is any man convinced by another's argument; passion and pride rise against it." R. "What would be the consequence, if a minister, sure of a majority in the house of commons, should resolve that there should be no speaking at all upon his side?" E. "He must soon go out. That has been tried; but it was found it would not do."——

E. "The Irish language is not primitive; it is Teutonic, a mixture of the northern tongues: it has much English in it." JOHNSON. "It may have been radically Teutonic; but English and High Dutch have no similarity to the eye, though radically the same. Once, when looking into Low Dutch, I found, in a whole page, only one word similar to English; *stroem*, like *stream*, and it signified *tide*." E. "I remember having seen a Dutch sonnet, in which I found this word, *roesnopies*. Nobody would at first think that this could be English: but, when we inquire, we find *roes*, rose, and *nopie*, knob; so we have *rosebuds*."

JOHNSON. "I have been reading Thicknesse's Travels, which I think are entertaining." BOSWELL "What, Sir, a good book?" JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir, to read once. I do not say you are to make a study of it, and digest it; and I believe it to be a true book in his intention. All travellers generally mean to tell truth; though Thicknesse observes, upon Smollett's account of his alarming a whole town in France by firing a blunderbus, and frightening a French nobleman till he made him tie on his portmanteau, that he would be loath to say Smollett had told two lies in one page; but he had found the only town in France where these things could have happened. Travellers must often be mistaken. In everything except where mensuration can be applied, they may honestly differ

hounds, fond of the man who shows them game, and by whose halloo they are used to be encouraged."

There has been, of late, a strange turn in travellers to be displeased ”

E. “From the experience which I have had,—and I have had a great deal,—I have learnt to think *better* of mankind.” JOHNSON. “From my experience I have found them worse in commercial dealings, more disposed to cheat than I had any notion of ; but more disposed to do one another good than I had conceived.” J. “Less just and more beneficent.” JOHNSON. “And, really, it is wonderful,—considering how much attention is necessary for men to take care of themselves, and ward off immediate evils which press upon them,—it is wonderful how much they do for others. As it is said of the greatest liar, that he tells more truth than falsehood ; so it may be said of the worst man, that he does more good than evil.” BOSWELL. “Perhaps from experience men may be found *happier* than we suppose.” JOHNSON. “No, Sir ; the more we inquire we shall find men the less happy.” P. “As to thinking better or worse of mankind from experience, some cunning people will not be satisfied unless they have put men to the test, as they think. There is a very good story told of Sir Godfrey Kneller, in his character of a justice of the peace. A gentleman brought his servant before him, upon an accusation of having stolen some money from him ; but it having come out that he had laid it purposely in the servant’s way, in order to try his honesty, Sir Godfrey sent the master to prison.”¹ JOHNSON. “To resist temptation once is not a sufficient proof of honesty. If a servant, indeed, were to resist the continued temptation of silver lying in a window, as some people let it lie, when he is sure his master does not know how much there is of it, he would give a strong proof of honesty. But this is a proof to which you have no right to put a man. You know, humanly speaking, there is a certain degree of temptation which will overcome any virtue. Now, in

¹ Pope thus introduces this story :—

“Faith, in such case if you should prosecute,
I think Sir Godfrey should decide the suit,
Who sent the thief who stole the cash away,
And punish’d him that put it in his way.”

Imit. of Horace, b. ii. ep. 2.—B.

Horace Walpole, in his “Anecdotes of Painting,” relates the story as of Sir Godfrey’s “dismissing a soldier who had stolen a joint of meat, and accusing the butcher of having tempted him by it.”—CHALMERS.

so far as you approach temptation to a man, you do him injury; and, if he is overcome, you share his guilt." P. "And, when once overcome, it is easier for him to be got the better of again." BOSWELL. "Yes, you are his seducer; you have debauched him. I have known a man resolved to put friendship to the test, by asking a friend to lend him money, merely with that view, when he did not want it." JOHNSON. "That is very wrong, Sir. Your friend may be a narrow man, and yet have many good qualities: narrowness may be his only fault. Now you are trying his general character as a friend by one particular singly, in which he happens to be defective, when, in truth, his character is composed of many particulars."

E. "I understand the hogshead of claret, which this society was favoured with by our friend the dean,¹ is nearly out; I think he should be written to, to send another of the same kind. Let the request be made with a happy ambiguity of expression, so that we may have the chance of his sending it also as a present." JOHNSON. "I am willing to offer my services as secretary on this occasion." P. "As many as are for Dr. Johnson being secretary hold up your hands.—Carried unanimously." BOSWELL. "He will be our dictator." JOHNSON. "No, the company is to dictate to me. I am only to write for wine; and I am quite disinterested, as I drink none; I shall not be suspected of having forged the application. I am no more than an humble scribe." E. "Then you shall prescribe." BOSWELL. "Very well. The first play of words to-day." J. "No, no; the *bulls* in Ireland." JOHNSON. "Were I your dictator, you should have no wine. It would be my business *cavere ne quid detrimenti Respublica caperet*, and wine is dangerous. Rome was ruined by luxury." (Smiling). E. "If you allow no wine as dictator, you shall not have me for your master of horse."

On Saturday, April 4, I drank tea with Johnson at Dr. Taylor's, where he had dined. He entertained us with an account of a tragedy written by a Dr. Kennedy (not the Lisbon physician). "The catastrophe of it," said he, "was, that a king who was jealous of his queen with his prime minister, castrated himself." This

¹ Dr. Barnard, Dean of Derry, afterwards Bishop of Killaloe and Limerick.—G.

² The reverse of the story of Comabab, on which Mr. David Hume told Lord Macartney, that a friend of his had written a tragedy. It is, however, possible, that I may have been

tragedy was actually shown about in manuscript to several people, and, amongst others, to Mr. Fitzherbert, who repeated to me two lines of the prologue :

‘ Our hero’s fate we have but gently touch’d ;
The fair might blame us, if it were less couched !’

It is hardly to be believed what absurd and indecent images men will introduce into their writings, without being sensible of the absurdity and indecency. I remember Lord Orrery told me, that there was a pamphlet written against Sir Robert Walpole, the whole of which was an allegory on the Phallick Obscenity. The Duchess of Buckingham asked Lord Orrery *who* this person was ? He answered he did not know. She said, she would send to Mr. Pulteney, who, she supposed, could inform her. So, then, to prevent her from making herself ridiculous, Lord Orrery sent her grace a note, in which he gave her to understand what was meant.”

He was very silent this evening, and read in a variety of books ; suddenly throwing down one, and taking up another.

He talked of going to Streatham that night. TAYLOR. “ You’ll be robbed, if you do ; or you must shoot a highwayman. Now, I would rather be robbed than do that ; I would not shoot a highwayman.” JOHNSON. “ But I would rather shoot him in the instant when he is attempting to rob me, than afterwards swear against him at the Old Bailey, to take away his life, after he has robbed me. I am surer I am right in the one case, than in the other. I may be mistaken as to the man when I swear ; I cannot be mistaken, if I shoot him in the act. Besides, we feel less reluctance to take away a man’s life, when we are heated by the injury, than to do it at a distance of time by an oath, after we have cooled.” BOSWELL. “ So, Sir, you would rather act from the motive of private passion, than that of public advantage.” JOHNSON. “ Nay, Sir, when I shoot the highwayman, I act from both.” BOSWELL. “ Very well, very well. There is no catching him. JOHNSON. “ At the same time, one does not know what to say. For perhaps one may,

inaccurate in my perception of what Dr. Johnson related, and that he may have been talking of the same ludicrous tragical subject that Mr. Hume had mentioned.—B. The story of Combarus, which was originally told by Lucian, may be found in Bayle’s Dictionary.—M.

a year after, hang himself from uneasiness for having shot a highwayman.¹ Few minds are fit to be trusted with so great a thing." BOSWELL. "Then, Sir, you would not shoot him?" JOHNSON. "But I might be vexed afterwards for that too."

Thrale's carriage not having come for him, as he expected, I accompanied him some part of the way home to his own house. I told him, that I had talked of him to Mr. Dunning a few days before, and had said, that in his company we did not so much interchange conversation, as listen to him; and that Dunning observed, upon this, "One is always willing to listen to Dr. Johnson;" to which I answered, "That is a great deal from you, Sir." "Yes, Sir," said Johnson, "a great deal indeed. Here is a man willing to listen, to whom the world is listening all the rest of the year." BOSWELL. "I think, Sir, it is right to tell one man of such a handsome thing, which has been said of him by another. It tends to increase benevolence." JOHNSON. "Undoubtedly it is right, Sir."

On Tuesday, April 7, I breakfasted with him at his house. He said, "Nobody was content." I mentioned to him a respectable person² in Scotland whom he knew; and I asserted, that I really believed he was always content. JOHNSON. "No, Sir, he is not content with the present; he has always some new scheme, some new plantation, something which is future. You know he was not content as a widower, for he married again." BOSWELL. "But he was not restless." JOHNSON. "Sir, he is only locally at rest. A chymist is locally at rest; but his mind is hard at work. This gentleman has done with external exertions. It is too late for him to engage in distant projects." BOSWELL. "He seems to amuse himself quite well; to have his attention fixed, and his tranquillity preserved, by very small matters. I have tried this; but it would not

¹ The late Duke of Montrose was generally said to have been uneasy on that account; but I can contradict the report from his grace's own authority. As he used to admit me to very easy conversation with him, I took the liberty to introduce the subject. His grace told me, that when riding one night near London, he was attacked by two highwaymen on horseback, and that he instantly shot one of them, upon which the other galloped off; that his servant, who was very well mounted, proposed to pursue him and take him, but that his grace said, "No, we have had blood enough; I hope the man may live to repent." His grace, upon my presuming to put the question, assured me, that his mind was not at all clouded by what he had thus done in self-defence.

² Lord Auchinleck, Mr. Boswell's father.—O.

do with me." JOHNSON. (laughing) "No, Sir, it must be born with a man to be contented to take up with little things. Women have a great advantage that they may take up with little things without disgracing themselves: a man cannot, except with fiddling. Had I learnt to fiddle, I should have done nothing else." BOSWELL. "Pray, Sir, did you ever play on any musical instrument?" JOHNSON. "No, Sir. I once bought me a flageolet; but I never made out a tune." BOSWELL. "A flageolet, Sir!—so small an instrument?" I should have liked to hear you play on the violoncello. *That* should have been *your* instrument." JOHNSON. "Sir, I might as well have played on the violoncello as another; but I should have done nothing else. No, Sir; a man would never undertake great things, could he be amused with small. I once tried knotting. Dempster's sister undertook to teach me; but I could not learn it." BOSWELL. "So, Sir; it will be related in pompous narrative, 'Once for his amusement he tried knotting; nor did this Hercules disdain the distaff.'" JOHNSON. "Knitting of stockings is a good amusement. As a freeman of Aberdeen, I should be a knitter of stockings." He asked me to go down with him and dine at Mr. Thrale's at Streatham, to which I agreed. I had lent him "An Account of Scotland in 1702," written by a man of various inquiry, an English chaplain to a regiment stationed there. JOHNSON. "It is sad stuff, Sir, miserably written, as books in general then were. There is now an elegance of style universally diffused. No man now writes so ill as 'Martin's Account of the Hebrides' is written. A man could not write so ill, if he should try. Set a merchant's clerk now to write, and he'll do better."

He talked to me with serious concern of a certain female friend's "laxity of narration, and inattention to truth." "I am as much vexed," said he, "at the ease with which she hears it mentioned to her, as at the thing itself. I told her, 'Madam, you are contented to hear every day said to you, what the highest of mankind have died for, rather than bear.' You know, Sir, the highest of mankind

¹ When I told this to Miss Seward, she smiled, and repeated with admirable readiness, from "Acts and Galatea:"—

"Bring me a hundred reeds of ample growth,
To make a pipe for my capacious mouth."

have died rather than bear to be told they had uttered a falsehood. Do talk to her of it; I am weary." BOSWELL. "Was not Dr. John Campbell a very inaccurate man in his narrative, Sir? He once told me that he drank thirteen bottles of port at a sitting." JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, I do not know that Campbell ever lied with pen and ink; but you could not entirely depend on anything he told you in conversation, if there was fact mixed with it. However, I loved Campbell: he was a solid orthodox man: he had a reverence for religion. Though defective in practice, he was religious in principle; and he did nothing grossly wrong that I have heard."¹

I told him that I had been present the day before, when Mrs. Montagu, the literary lady, sat to Miss Reynolds for her picture; and that she said, "she had bound up Mr. Gibbon's History without the last two offensive chapters; for that she thought the book so far good, as it gave, in an elegant manner, the substance of the bad writers *medii ævi*, which the late Lord Lyttleton advised her to read." JOHNSON. "Sir, she has not read them: she shows none of this impetuosity to me: she does not know Greek, and, I fancy, knows little Latin. She is willing you should think she knows them; but she does not say she does." BOSWELL. "Mr. Harris, who was present, agreed with her." JOHNSON. "Harris was laughing at her, Sir. Harris is a sound sullen scholar; he does not like interlopers. Harris, however, is a prig, and a bad prig."² I looked

¹ Lord Macartney observes upon this passage, "I have heard him tell many things, which, though embellished by their mode of narrative, had their foundation in truth; but I never remember anything approaching to this. If he had written it, I should have supposed some wag had put the figure of one before the three." I am, however, absolutely certain that Dr. Campbell told me it, and I gave particular attention to it, being myself a lover of wine, and therefore curious to hear whatever is remarkable concerning drinking. There can be no doubt that some men can drink, without suffering any injury, such a quantity as to others appears incredible. It is but fair to add, that Dr. Campbell told me, he took a very long time to this great potation; and I have heard Dr. Johnson say, "Sir, if a man drinks very slowly, and lets one glass evaporate before he takes another, I know not how long he may drink." Dr. Campbell mentioned a colonel of militia who sat with him all the time, and drank equally.

² Dr. John Campbell died about two years before this conversation took place; December, 1775.—M.

³ What my friend meant by these words concerning the amiable philosopher of Salisbury, I am at a loss to understand. A friend suggests, that Johnson thought his *manner* as a writer affected, while at the same time the *matter* did not compensate for that fault. In short, that he meant to make a remark quite different from that which a celebrated gentleman made on a very eminent physician: He is a coxcomb, but a *satisfactory coxcomb*.—B. The *celebrated gentleman* here alluded to was the late Right Hon. William Gerard Hamilton.—M.

into his book, and thought he did not understand his own system."

BOSWELL. "He says plain things in a formal and abstract way, to be sure; but his method is good: for to have clear notions upon any subject, we must have recourse to analytic arrangement."

JOHNSON. "Sir, it is what everybody does, whether they will or no. But sometimes things may be made darker by definition. I see a cow. I define her, *Animal quadrupes ruminans cornutum*. But a goat ruminates, and a cow may have no horns. Cow is plainer."

BOSWELL. "I think Dr. Franklin's definition of *Man* a good one—'A tool-making animal.'" JOHNSON. "But many a man never made a tool: and suppose a man without arms, he could not make a tool."

Talking of drinking wine, he said, "I did not leave off wine because I could not bear it; I have drunk three bottles of port without being the worse for it. University College has witnessed this."

BOSWELL. "Why, then, Sir, did you leave it off?" JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, because it is so much better for a man to be sure that he is never to be intoxicated, never to lose the power over himself. I shall not begin to drink wine again till I grow old,¹ and want it."

BOSWELL. "I think, Sir, you once said to me, that not to drink wine was a great deduction from life." JOHNSON. "It is a diminution of pleasure, to be sure; but I do not say a diminution of happiness. There is more happiness in being rational." BOSWELL.

"But if we could have pleasure always, should not we be happy? The greatest part of men would compound for pleasure." JOHNSON.

"Supposing we could have pleasure always, an intellectual man would not compound for it. The greatest part of men would compound, because the greatest part of men are gross." BOSWELL. "I

allow there may be greater pleasure than from wine. I have had more pleasure from your conversation. I have indeed; I assure you I have." JOHNSON. "When we talk of pleasure, we mean sensual pleasure. When a man says he had pleasure with a woman, he does not mean conversation, but something of a different nature. Philosophers tell you, that pleasure is *contrary* to happiness. Gross men prefer animal pleasure. So there are men who

¹ He was now in his seventieth year.—O.

prefer living among savages. Now, what a wretch must he be, who is content with such conversation as can be had among savages ! You may remember an officer at Fort Augustus who had served in America, told us of a woman whom they were obliged to *bind*, in order to get back from savage life." BOSWELL. "She must have been an animal, beast." JOHNSON. "Sir, she was a speaking cat."

I mentioned to him that I had become very weary in company where I heard not a single intellectual sentence, except that "a man who had been settled ten years in Minorca was become a much inferior man to what he was in London, because a man's mind grows narrow in a narrow place." JOHNSON. "A man's mind grows narrow in a narrow place, whose mind is enlarged only because he has lived in a large place : but what is got by books and thinking is preserved in a narrow place as well as in a large place. A man cannot know modes of life as well in Minorca as in London ; but he may study mathematics as well in Minorca." BOSWELL. "I don't know, Sir : if you had remained ten years in the Isle of Col, you would not have been the man that you now are." JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir, if I had been there from fifteen to twenty-five ; but not if from twenty-five to thirty-five." BOSWELL. "I own, Sir, the spirits which I have in London make me do everything with more readiness and vigour. I can talk twice as much in London as anywhere else."

Of Goldsmith, he said, "He was not an agreeable companion, for he talked always for fame. A man who does so never can be pleasing. The man who talks to unburden his mind is the man to delight you. An eminent friend of ours¹ is not so agreeable as the variety of his knowledge would otherwise make him, because he talks partly from ostentation."

Soon after our arrival at Thrale's, I heard one of the maids calling eagerly on another to go to Dr. Johnson. I wondered what this could mean. I afterwards learnt, that it was to give her a Bible, which he had brought from London as a present to her.

He was for a considerable time occupied in reading "*Mémoires de Fontenelle*," leaning and swinging upon the low gate into the court, without his hat.

I looked into Lord Kaimes's "Sketches of the History of Man ;" and mentioned to Dr. Johnson his censure of Charles V., for celebrating his funeral obsequies in his lifetime, which, I told him, I had been used to think a solemn and affecting act." JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, a man may dispose his mind to think so of that act of Charles ; but it is so liable to ridicule, that if one man out of ten thousand laughs at it, he'll make the other nine thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine laugh too." I could not agree with him in this.

Sir John Pringle had expressed a wish that I would ask Dr. Johnson's opinion what were the best English sermons for style. I took an opportunity to-day of mentioning several to him. "Atterbury?" JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir, one of the best." BOSWELL. "Tillotson?" JOHNSON. "Why, not now. I should not advise a preacher at this day to imitate Tillotson's style ; though I don't know ; I should be cautious of objecting to what has been applauded by so many suffrages.—South is one of the best, if you except his peculiarities, and his violence, and sometimes coarseness of language.—Seed has a very fine style ; but he is not very theological.—Jortin's sermons are very elegant.—Sherlock's style, too, is very elegant, though he has not made it his principal study.—And you may add Smalridge. All the latter preachers have a good style. Indeed, nobody now talks much of style : every body composes pretty well. There are no such inharmonious periods as there were a hundred years ago. I should recommend Dr. Clarke's sermons, were he orthodox. However, it is very well known *where* he is not orthodox, which was upon the doctrine of the Trinity, as to which he is a condemned heretic ; so one is aware of it." BOSWELL. "I like Ogden's Sermons on Prayer very much, both for neatness of style and subtilty of reasoning." JOHNSON. "I should like to read all that Ogden has written." BOSWELL. "What I wish to know is, what sermons afford the best specimen of English pulpit eloquence." JOHNSON. "We have no sermons addressed to the passions, that are good for anything ; if you mean that kind of eloquence." A CLERGYMAN (whose name I do not recollect). "Were not Dodd's sermons addressed to the passions?" JOHNSON. "They were nothing, Sir, be they addressed to what they may."

At dinner, Mrs. Thrale expressed a wish to go and see Scotland. JOHNSON. "Seeing Scotland, Madam, is only seeing a worse England. It is seeing the flower gradually fade away to the naked stalk. Seeing the Hebrides indeed, is seeing quite a different scene."

Our poor friend, Mr. Thomas Davies, was soon to have a benefit at Drury Lane Theatre, as some relief to his unfortunate circumstances. We were all warmly interested for his success, and had contributed to it. However, we thought there was no harm in having our joke, when he could not be hurt by it. I proposed that he should be brought on to speak a prologue upon the occasion; and I began to mutter fragments of what it might be; as, that when now grown *old*, he was obliged to cry "Poor Tom's *a-cold*;"—that he owned he had been driven from the stage by a Churchill, but that this was no disgrace, for a Churchill had beat the French;—that he had been satirised as "mouthing a sentence as curs mouth a bone," but he was now glad of a bone pick. "Nay," said Johnson, "I would have him to say,—

'Mad Tom is come to see the world again.'

He and I returned to town in the evening. Upon the road, I endeavoured to maintain in argument, that a landed gentleman is not under any obligation to reside upon his estate; and that by living in London he does no injury to his country. JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, he does no injury to his country in general, because the money which he draws from it gets back again in circulation; but to his particular district, his particular parish, he does an injury. All that he has to give away is not given to those who have the first claim to it. And though I have said that the money circulates back, it is a long time before that happens. Then, Sir, a man of family and estate ought to consider himself as having the charge of a district, over which he is to diffuse civility and happiness."

Next day I found him at home in the morning. He praised Delany's "Observations on Swift;" said that his book and Lord Orrery's might both be true, though one viewed Swift more, and the other less, favourably; and that between both, we might have a complete notion of Swift.

Talking of a man's resolving to deny himself the use of wine, from moral and religious considerations, he said, "He must not doubt about it. When one doubts as to pleasure, we know what will be the conclusion. I now no more think of drinking wine than a horse does. The wine upon the table is no more for me, than for the dog who is under the table."

CHAPTER XVIII.

1778.

Horace's Villa—Country Life—Great Cities—French Literature—Old Age—"Unius Læcrtas"—Potter's *Æschylus*—Pope's *Homer*—Sir W. Temple's *Style*—Elphinston's *Martial*—Hawkins's *Tragedy*—Insubordination—Fame—Use of Riches—Economy—Soldiers and Sailors—Charles Fox—De Foe—Cock-Lane Ghost—Asking Questions—Hulks—Foreign Travel—Short Hand—Dodd's Poems—Pennant—Johnson and Percy—Stratagem—Correspondence.

ON Thursday, April 9, I dined with him at Sir Joshua Reynolds's, with the Bishop of St. Asaph (Dr. Shipley), Mr. Allan Ramsay,¹ Mr. Gibbon, Mr. Cambridge, and Mr. Langton. Mr. Ramsay had lately returned from Italy, and entertained us with his observations upon Horace's villa, which he had examined with great care. I relished this much, as it brought fresh into my mind what I had viewed with great pleasure thirteen years before. The bishop, Dr. Johnson, and Mr. Cambridge, joined with Mr. Ramsay, in recollecting the various lines in Horace relating to the subject.

Horace's journey to Brundisium being mentioned, Johnson observed, that the brook which he describes is to be seen now, exactly as at that time; and that he had often wondered how it happened, that small brooks, such as this, kept the same situation for ages, notwithstanding earthquakes, by which even mountains have been changed, and agriculture, which produces such a variation upon the surface of the earth. CAMBRIDGE. "A Spanish writer has this thought in a poetical conceit. After observing, that most of the solid structures of Rome are totally perished, while the Tiber remains the same, he adds,—

‘Lo que era firme huió, solamente
Lo Fugitivo permanece y dura.’”

JOHNSON. “Sir, that is taken from Janus Vitalis :—

¹ An eminent painter, son of the Scottish poet : he died in 1784, at Dover, on his return from his fourth visit to Italy.—C.

———— immota labescunt;
Et quæ perpetuò sunt agitata manent.'"

The bishop said, it appeared from Horace's writings that he was a cheerful, contented man. JOHNSON. "We have no reason to believe that, my lord. Are we to think Pope was happy, because he says so in his writings? We see in his writings what he wished the state of his mind to appear. Dr. Young, who pined for preferment, talks with contempt of it in his writings, and affects to despise everything that he did not despise." BISHOP OF ST. ASAPH. "He was like other chaplains, looking for vacancies: but that is not peculiar to the clergy. I remember, when I was with the army, after the battle of Lafeldt, the officers seriously grumbled that no general was killed." CAMBRIDGE. "We may believe Horace more, when he says:

'Romæ Tibur amem ventosus, Tibure Romam,'

than when he boasts of his consistency:—

'Me constare mihi scis, et discedere tristem,
Quandocunque trahunt invisa negotia Romam.'

BOSWELL. "How hard is it that man can never be at rest!" RAMSAY. "It is not in his nature to be at rest. When he is at rest, he is in the worst state that he can be in: for he has nothing to agitate him. He is then like the man in the Irish song¹:—

'There lived a young man in Ballinacrazy,
Who wanted a wife for to make him unaisy.'

Goldsmith being mentioned, Johnson observed, that it was long before his merit came to be acknowledged: that he once complained to him in ludicrous terms of distress, "Whenever I write anything, the public *make a point* to know nothing about it:" but that his "Traveller"² brought him into high reputation. LANGTON. "There is not one bad line in that poem; not one of Dryden's careless ver-

¹ Called "Alley Croker." This lady, a celebrated beauty in her day, was the youngest daughter of Colonel Croker, of Ballinagard, in the county of Limerick. The lover whose rejection has immortalised her name, is not known; but she married Charles Langley, Esq, of Lisnarnock. She died without issue, about the middle of the last century.—C.

² First published in 1765.—M.

LOS." SIR JOSHUA. "I was glad to hear Charles Fox say, it was one of the finest poems in the English language." LANGTON. "Why were you glad? You surely had no doubt of this before." JOHNSON. "No; the merit of 'The Traveller' is so well established, that Mr. Fox's praise cannot augment it, nor his censure diminish it." SIR JOSHUA. "But his friends may suspect they had too great a partiality for him." JOHNSON. "Nay, Sir, the partiality of his friends was always against him. It was with difficulty we could give him a hearing. Goldsmith had no settled notions upon any subject; so he talked always at random. It seemed to be his intention to blurt out whatever was in his mind, and see what would become of it. He was angry, too, when caught in an absurdity; but it did not prevent him from falling into another the next minute. I remember Chamier, after talking with him some time, said, 'Well, I do believe he wrote this poem himself; and, let me tell you, that is believing a great deal.' Chamier once asked him, what he meant by *slow*, the last word in the first line of 'The Traveller,'—

'Remote, unfriended, melancholy, slow.'

Did he mean tardiness of locomotion? Goldsmith, who would say something without consideration, answered, 'Yes.' I was sitting by, and said, 'No, Sir, you do not mean tardiness of locomotion; you mean that sluggishness of mind which comes upon a man in solitude.' Chamier believed then that I had written the line, as much as if he had seen me write it. Goldsmith, however, was a man, who, whatever he wrote, did it better than any other man could do. He deserved a place in Westminster Abbey; and every year he lived would have deserved it better. He had, indeed, been at no pains to fill his mind with knowledge. He transplanted it from one place to another, and it did not settle in his mind; so he could not tell what was in his own books."

We talked of living in the country. JOHNSON. "No wise man will go to live in the country, unless he has something to do which can be better done in the country. For instance; if he is to shut himself up for a year to study a science, it is better to look out to the fields than to an opposite wall. Then if a man walks out in the country, there is nobody to keep him from walking in again; but if

a man walks out in London, he is not sure when he shall walk in again. A great city is, to be sure, the school for studying life; and 'The proper study of mankind is man,' as Pope observes." BOSWELL. "I fancy London is the best place for society; though I have heard that the very first society of Paris is still beyond anything that we have here." JOHNSON. "Sir, I question if in Paris such a company as is sitting round this table could be got together in less than half a year. They talk in France of the felicity of men and women living together: the truth is, that there the men are not higher than the women, they know no more than the women do, and they are not held down in their conversation by the presence of women." RAMSAY. "Literature is upon the growth, it is in its spring in France: here it is rather *passée*." JOHNSON. "Literature was in France long before we had it. Paris was the second city for the revival of letters: Italy had it first, to be sure. What have we done for literature, equal to what was done by the Stephani and others in France? Our literature came to us through France. Caxton printed only two books, Chaucer and Gower, that were not translated from the French; and Chaucer, we know, took much from the Italians. No, Sir, if literature be in its spring in France, it is a second spring; it is after a winter. We are now before the French in literature: but we had it long after them. In England, any man who wears a sword and a powdered wig is ashamed to be illiterate. I believe it is not so in France. Yet there is, probably, a great deal of learning in France, because they have such a number of religious establishments; so many men who have nothing else to do but to study. I do not know this; but I take it upon the common principles of chance. Where there are many shooters some will hit."

We talked of old age. Johnson (now in his seventieth year) said, "It is a man's own fault, it is from want of use, if his mind grows torpid in old age."¹ The bishop asked, if an old man does

¹ Hobbes was of the same opinion with Johnson on this subject; and, in his answer to D'Avenant's Preface to Gondibert, with great spirit, explodes the current opinion, that the mind in old age is subject to a necessary and irresistible debility. "And now, while I think on't," says the philosopher, "give me leave, with a short discord, to sweeten the harmony of the approaching close. I have nothing to object to your poem, but dissent only from some thing in your preface, sounding to the prejudice of age. It is commonly said, that old age is

not lose faster than he gets. JOHNSON. "I think not, my Lord, if he exerts himself." One of the company rashly observed, that he thought it was happy for an old man that insensibility comes upon him. JOHNSON (with a noble elevation and disdain.) "No, Sir, I should never be happy by being less rational." BISHOP OF ST. ASAPH. "Your wish then, Sir, is *γρηασκειν διδασκομενος*." JOHNSON. "Yes, my Lord." His Lordship mentioned a charitable establishment in Wales, where people were maintained, and supplied with everything, upon the condition of their contributing the weekly produce of their labour; and, he said, they grew quite torpid for want of property. JOHNSON. "They have no object for hope. Their condition cannot be better. It is rowing without a port."

One of the company asked him the meaning of the expression in Juvenal, *unius lacertæ*. JOHNSON. "I think it clear enough; as much ground as one may have a chance to find a lizard upon."

Commentators have differed as to the exact meaning of the expression by which the poet intended to enforce the sentiment contained in the passage where these words occur. It is enough that they mean to denote even a very small possession, provided it be a man's own :—

"Est aliquid, quocunque loco, quocunque recessu,
Unius sese dominum fecisse lacertæ."¹

a return to childhood: which methinks you insist on so long, as if you desired it should be believed. That's the note I mean to shake a little. That saying, meant only of the weakness of body, was wrested to the weakness of mind, by froward children, weary of the controulment of their parents, masters, and other admonitors. Secondly, the dotage and childishness they ascribe to age is never the effect of time, but sometimes of the excesses of youth, and not a returning to, but a continual stay with, childhood. For they that want the curiosity of furnishing their memories with the rarities of nature in their youth, and pass their time in making provision only for their ease and sensual delight, are children still, at what years soever; as they that coming into a populous city, never going out of their inn, are strangers still, how long soever they have been there. Thirdly, there is no reason for any man to think himself wiser to-day than yesterday, which does not equally convince he shall be wiser to-morrow than to-day. Fourthly, you will be forced to change your opinion hereafter, when you are old; and, in the meantime, you discredit all I have said before in your commendation, because I am old already. But no more of this." Hobbes, when he wrote these pleasing and sensible remarks, was sixty-two years old, and D'Avenant forty-five.—M.

¹ Poor Boswell was a man of infinite curiosity: it is a pity that he never heard of the ingenious conjecture of a Dutch critic, who would exchange *lacertæ* for *lacertæ*, which he accurately translates *een handvol landts*, and still more accurately interprets, 'a piece of ground

This season there was a whimsical fashion in the newspapers of applying Shakspeare's words to describe living persons well known in the world ; which was done under the title of "Modern Characters from Shakspeare ;" many of which were admirably adapted. The fancy took so much, that they were afterwards collected into a pamphlet. Somebody said to Johnson, across the table, that he had not been in those characters. "Yes," said he, "I have. I should have been sorry to have been left out." He then repeated what had been applied to him :—

"You must borrow me Garagantua's mouth."

Miss Reynolds not perceiving at once the meaning of this, he was obliged to explain it to her, which had something of an awkward and ludicrous effect. "Why, Madam, it has a reference to me, as using big words, which require the mouth of a giant to pronounce them. Garagantua is the name of a giant in Rabelais." BOSWELL. "But, Sir, there is another amongst them for you :—

'He would not flatter Neptune for his trident,
Or Jove for his power to thunder.'"

JOHNSON. "There is nothing marked in that. No, Sir Garagantua is the best." Notwithstanding this ease and good-humour, when I, a little while afterwards, repeated his sarcasm on Kenrick (vol. i. p. 399.), which was received with applause, he asked, "*Who* said that?" and on my suddenly answering.—*Garagantua*, he looked serious, which was a sufficient indication that he did not wish it to be kept up.

When we went to the drawing-room, there was a rich assemblage. Besides the company who had been at dinner, there were Mr. Garrick, Mr. Harris of Salisbury, Dr. Percy Dr. Burney, the Honourable Mrs. Cholmondeley, Miss Hannah Moore, &c. &c.

After wandering about in a kind of pleasing distraction for some time, I got into a corner, with Johnson, Garrick, and Harris. GARRICK (to Harris.) "Pray, Sir, have you read Potter's *Æschylus*?"

equ. a' 'n extent to the space between the shoulder and the elbow' (of a middle-sized man, I presume ; though the critic has inadvertently forgotten to mention it).—GIFFORD, *Juvenal*, v. i. p. 124.

HARRIS. "Yes; and think it pretty." GARRICK (to Johnson). "And what think you, Sir, of it?" JOHNSON. "I thought what I read of it *verbiage*: but upon Mr. Harris's recommendation, I will read a play. (To Mr. Harris.) Don't prescribe two." Mr. Harris suggested one, I do not remember which. JOHNSON. "We must try its effect as an English poem; that is the way to judge of the merit of a translation. Translations are, in general, for people who cannot read the original." I mentioned the vulgar saying, that Pope's Homer was not a good representation of the original. JOHNSON. "Sir, it is the greatest work of the kind that has ever been produced." BOSWELL. "The truth is, it is impossible perfectly to translate poetry. In a different language it may be the same tune, but it has not the same tone. Homer plays it on a bassoon: Pope on a flageolet." HARRIS. "I think heroic poetry is best in blank verse; yet it appears that rhyme is essential to English poetry, from our deficiency in metrical quantities. In my opinion, the chief excellence of our language is numerous prose." JOHNSON. "Sir William Temple was the first writer who gave cadence to English prose.¹ Before his time they were careless of arrangement, and did not mind whether a sentence ended with an important word or an insignificant word, or with what part of speech it was concluded." Mr. Langton, who now had joined us, commended Clarendon. JOHNSON. "He is objected to for his parentheses, his involved

¹ The author says, that Johnson once told him, "that he had formed his style upon that of Sir William Temple, and upon Chambers's Proposal for his Dictionary. He certainly was mistaken; or, if he imagined, at first, that he was imitating Temple, he was very unsuccessful; for nothing can be more unlike than the simplicity of Temple and the richness of Johnson." This observation of our author, on the first view, seems perfectly just; but, on a closer examination, it will, I think, appear to have been founded on a misapprehension. Mr. Boswell understood Johnson too literally. He did not, I conceive, mean, that he endeavoured to imitate Temple's style in all its parts; but that he formed his style on him and Chambers (perhaps the paper published in 1737, relative to his second edition, entitled "Considerations," &c.), taking from each what was most worthy of imitation. The passage before us, I think, shows that he learned from Temple to modulate his periods, and, *in that respect only*, made him his pattern. In this view of the subject there is no difficulty. He might learn from Chambers, compactness, strength, and precision (in opposition to the laxity of style which had long prevailed); from Sir Thomas Browne (who was certainly one of his archetypes), *pondera verborum*, vigour and energy of expression; and from Temple, harmonious arrangement, the due collocation of words, and the other arts and graces of composition here enumerated: and yet, after all, his style might bear no striking resemblance to that of any of these writers, though it had profited by each.—M.

clauses, and his want of harmony. But he is supported by his matter. It is, indeed, owing to a plethora of matter that his style is so faulty; every *substance* (smiling to Mr. Harris) has so many *accidents*.—To be distinct, we must talk *analytically*. If we analyse language, we must speak of it grammatically; if we analyse argument, we must speak of it logically.” GARRICK. “Of all the translations that ever were attempted, I think Elphinston’s *Martia* the most extraordinary. He consulted me upon it, who am a little of an epigrammatist myself, you know. I told him freely ‘You don’t seem to have that turn.’ I asked him if he was serious; and finding he was, I advised him against publishing. Why, his translation is more difficult to understand than the original. I thought him a man of some talents; but he seems crazy in this.” JOHNSON. “Sir, you have done what I had not courage to do. But he did not ask my advice, and I did not force it upon him, to make him angry with me.” GARRICK. “But as a friend, Sir——” JOHNSON. “Why, such a friend as I am with him.—no.” GARRICK. “But if you see a friend going to tumble over a precipice?” JOHNSON. “That is an extravagant case, Sir. You are sure a friend will thank you for hindering him from tumbling over a precipice: but, in the other case, I should hurt his vanity, and do him no good. He would not take my advice. His brother-in-law, Strahan, sent him a subscription of fifty pounds, and said he would send him fifty more, if he would not publish.” GARRICK. “What! eh! is Strahan a good judge of an epigram? Is not he rather an *obtuse* man, eh?” JOHNSON. “Why, Sir, he may not be a judge of an epigram: but you see he is a judge of what is *not* an epigram.” BOSWELL. “It is easy for you, Mr. Garrick, to talk to an author as you talked to Elphinston; you, who have been so long the manager of a theatre, rejecting the plays of poor authors. You are an old judge, who have often pronounced sentence of death. You are a practised surgeon, who have often amputated limbs; and though this may have been for the good of your patients, they cannot like you. Those who have undergone a dreadful operation are not very fond of seeing the operator again.” GARRICK. “Yes, I know enough of that. There was a reverend gentleman (Mr. Hawkins) who wrote a tragedy,

the SIEGE of something,' which I refused." HARRIS. "So, the siege was raised." JOHNSON. "Ay, he came to me and complained; and told me, that Garrick said his play was wrong in the *concoction*. Now, what is the concoction of a play!" (Here Garrick started, and twisted himself, and seemed sorely vexed; for Johnson told me, he believed the story was true.) GARRICK. "I—I—I—said, *first* concoction." JOHNSON (smiling). "Well, he left out *first*. And Rich, he said, refused him *in false English*: he could show it under his hand" GARRICK. "He wrote to me in violent wrath, for having refused his play: 'Sir, this is growing a very serious and terrible affair. I am resolved to publish my play. I will appeal to the world; and how will your judgment appear?' I answered, 'Sir, notwithstanding all the seriousness, and all the terrors, I have no objection to your publishing your play: and, as you live at a great distance (Devonshire, I believe), if you will send it to me I will convey it to the press.'"¹ I never heard more of it, ha! ha! ha!"

On Friday, April 10, I found Johnson at home in the morning. We resumed the conversation of yesterday. He put me in mind of some of it which had escaped my memory, and enabled me to record it more perfectly than I otherwise could have done. He was much pleased with my paying so great attention to his recommendation in 1763, the period when our acquaintance began, that I should keep a journal; and I could perceive he was secretly pleased to find so

¹ It was called "The Siege of Aleppo." Mr. Hawkins, the author of it, was formerly professor of poetry at Oxford. It is printed in his "Miscellanies," 3 vols. 8vo.—B.

² Garrick had high authority for this expression. Dryden uses it in his preface to "Œdipus."—M.

³ Garrick a little embellishes the reply. He did *not* offer "to convey the play to the press," but in a long, contentious letter says, that he will "forgive Hawkins's publishing an appeal on the rejection of his plays, if he will publish the plays themselves;" and this was so far from silencing Hawkins, that he rejoined in a still more violent letter. The reader will, perhaps, not be sorry to see a *sketch* of this evening by another hand, more partial to Garrick. Hannah More writes, "I dined with the Garricks on Thursday; he went with me in the evening to Sir Joshua's, where I was engaged to pass the evening. I was not a little proud of being the means of bringing such a beau into such a party. We found Gibbon, Johnson, Hermes, Harris, Burney, Chambers, Ramsay, the Bishop of St. Asaph, Boswell, Langton, &c., and scarce an expletive man or woman amongst them. *Garrick put Johnson into such good spirits*, that I never knew him so entertaining or more instructive. He was as brilliant as himself, and as good-humoured as any one else."—*More's Life*, vol. i. p. 146. How infinitely inferior are these generalities to the vivacious details of Boswell!—C

much of the fruit of his mind preserved ; and as he had been used to imagine and say, that he always laboured when he said a good thing,—it delighted him, on a review, to find that his conversation teemed with point and imagery.

I said to him, “You were, yesterday, Sir, in remarkably good humour ; but there was nothing to offend you, nothing to produce irritation or violence. There was no bold offender. There was not one capital conviction. It was a maiden assize. You had on your white gloves.”¹

He found fault with our friend Langton for having been too silent. “Sir,” said I, “you will recollect that he very properly took up Sir Joshua for being glad that Charles Fox had praised Goldsmith’s ‘Traveller,’ and you joined him.” JOHNSON. “Yes, Sir, I knocked Fox on the head, without ceremony. Reynolds is too much under Fox and Burke at present. He is under the *Fox star*, and the *Irish constellation*. He is always under some planet.” BOSWELL. “There is no Fox star.”² JOHNSON. “But there is a dog star.” BOSWELL. “They say, indeed, a fox and a dog are the same animal.”

I reminded him of a gentleman who, Mrs. Cholmondeley said, was first talkative from affectation, and then silent from the same cause : that he first thought “I shall be celebrated as the liveliest man in every company ;” and then, all at once, “O ! it is much more respectable to be grave and look wise.” “He has reversed the Pythagorean discipline, by being first talkative and then silent. He reverses the course of nature too ; he was first the gay butterfly and then the creeping worm.” Johnson laughed loud and long at this expansion and illustration of what he himself had told me.

We dined together with Mr Scott (now Sir William Scott, his majesty’s advocate general), at his chambers in the Temple, nobody else there. The company being small, Johnson was not in such spirits as he had been the preceding day,³ and for a considerable

¹ At an assize, where there has been no capital conviction, the judge receives a pair of white gloves.—C.

² There is a constellation called the *Fox*.—C.

³ Hannah More says, on the contrary, of a very small party at her lodgings, “Johnson, full of wisdom and piety, was very communicative. To enjoy Dr. Johnson perfectly, one must have him to oneself, as he seldom cares to speak in mixed parties.”—*Life*, vol. i. p. 64, sub. all. 1776. But Boswell was the better judge in this matter.—C. 1885.

time little was said. At last he burst forth :—"Subordination is sadly broken down in this age. No man, now, has the same authority which his father had—except a gaoler. No master has it over his servants : it is diminished in our colleges ; nay, in our grammar-schools." BOSWELL. "What is the cause of this, Sir?" JOHNSON. "Why, the coming in of the Scotch," laughing sarcastically. BOSWELL. "That is to say, things have been turned topsy-turvy.—But your serious cause." JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, there are many causes, the chief of which is, I think, the great increase of money. No man now depends upon the lord of a manor, when he can send to another country and fetch provisions. The shoe-black at the entry of my court does not depend on me. I can deprive him but of a penny a day, which he hopes somebody else will bring him ; and that penny I must carry to another shoe-black, so the trade suffers nothing. I have explained in my 'Journey to the Hebrides,' how gold and silver destroy feudal subordination. But, besides, there is a general relaxation of reverence. No son now depends upon his father, as in former times. Paternity used to be considered as of itself a great thing, which had a right to many claims. That is, in general, reduced to very small bounds. My hope is, that as anarchy produces tyranny, this extreme relaxation will produce *freni strictio*."

Talking of fame, for which there is so great a desire, I observed, how little there is of it in reality, compared with the other objects of human attention. "Let every man recollect, and he will be sensible how small a part of his time is employed in talking or thinking of Shakspeare, Voltaire, or any of the most celebrated men that have ever lived, or are now supposed to occupy the attention and admiration of the world. Let this be extracted and compressed ; into what a narrow space will it go !" I then silyly¹ introduced Mr. Garrick's fame, and his assuming the airs of a great man. JOHNSON. "Sir, it is wonderful how *little* Garrick assumes. No, Sir, Garrick *fortunam reverenter habet*. Consider, Sir ; celebrated men, such as you have mentioned, have had their applause at a distance ; but Gar-

¹ This slyness was not quite fair ; and in justice to Johnson it should be observed, that though on this occasion no harm was done, Boswell often betrayed him by these arts into personal censures, which he would probably never otherwise have uttered, and which we know he sometimes regretted.—C. 1835.

rick had it dashed in his face, sounded in his ears, and went home every night with the plaudits of a thousand in his *cranium*. Then, Sir, Garrick did not *find* but *made* his way to the tables, the levees, and almost the bed-chambers of the great. Then, Sir, Garrick had under him a numerous body of the people ; who, from fear of his power and hopes of his favour, and admiration of his talents, were constantly submissive to him. And here is a man who has advanced the dignity of his profession. Garrick has made a player a higher character." SCOTT. "And he is a very sprightly writer too." JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir, and all this supported by great wealth of his own acquisition. If all this had happened to me, I should have had a couple of fellows with long poles walking before me, to knock down everybody that stood in the way. Consider, if all this had happened to Cibber or Quin, they'd have jumped over the moon. Yet Garrick speaks to *us*" (smiling). BOSWELL. "And Garrick is a very good man, a charitable man." JOHNSON. "Sir, a liberal man. He has given away more money than any man in England. There may be a little vanity mixed ; but he has shown, that money is not his first object." BOSWELL. "Yet Foote used to say of him, that he walked out with an intention to do a generous action ; but, turning the corner of a street, he met with the ghost of a half-penny, which frightened him." JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, that is very true too : for I never knew a man of whom it could be said with less certainty to-day, what he will do to-morrow, than Garrick ; it

¹ Miss Hawkins says, "At Hampton, and in its neighbourhood, Mr. and Mrs. Garrick took the rank of the *noblesse*—everything was in good taste, and his establishment distinguished—he drove four horses when going to town." She adds the following lively description of his personal appearance : "I see him now in a dark blue coat, the button-holes bound with gold, a small cocked hat laced with gold, his waistcoat very open, and his countenance never at rest, and, indeed, seldom his person ; for, in the relaxation of the country, he gave way to all his natural volatility, and with my father was perfectly at ease, sometimes sitting on a table, and then, if he saw my brothers at a distance on the lawn, shooting off like an arrow out of a bow in a spirited chase of them round the garden. I remember—when my father, having me in his hand, met him on the common, riding his pretty pony—his moving my compassion by lamenting the misery of being summoned to town in hot weather (I think August) to play before the King of Denmark. I thought him sincere, and his case pitiable, till my father assured me that he was in reality very well pleased, and that what he groaned at as labour was an honour paid to his talents. The natural expression of his countenance was far from placidity. I confess I was afraid of him ; more so than I was of Johnson, whom I knew not to be, nor could suppose he ever would be thought to be, an extraordinary man. Garrick had a frown and spoke impetuously. Johnson was slow and kind in his way to children." *Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 21.—O.

depends so much on his humour at the time." SCOTT. "I am glad to hear of his liberality. He has been represented as very saving." JOHNSON. "With his domestic saving we have nothing to do. I remember drinking tea with him long ago, when Peg Woffington made it, and he grumbled at her for making it too strong.¹ He had then begun to feel money in his purse, and did not know when he should have enough of it."²

On the subject of wealth, the proper use of it, and the effects of that art which is called economy, he observed, "It is wonderful to think how men of very large estates not only spend their yearly incomes, but are often actually in want of money. It is clear they have not value for what they spend. Lord Shelburne told me, that a man of high rank, who looks into his own affairs, may have all that he ought to have, all that can be of any use, or appear with any advantage, for five thousand pounds a year. Therefore, a great proportion must go in waste ; and indeed, this is the case with most people, whatever their fortune is." BOSWELL. "I have no doubt, Sir, of this. But how is it? What is waste?" JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, breaking bottles, and a thousand other things. Waste cannot be accurately told, though we are sensible how destructive it is. Economy on the one hand, by which a certain income is made to maintain a man genteelly, and waste on the other, by which, on the same income, another man lives shabbily, cannot be defined. It is a very nice thing ; as one man wears his coat out much sooner than another, we cannot tell how."

We talked of war. JOHNSON. "Every man thinks meanly of himself for not having been a soldier, or not having been at sea." BOSWELL. "Lord Mansfield does not." JOHNSON. "Sir, if Lord Mansfield were in a company of general officers and admirals who have been in service, he would shrink ; he'd wish to creep under the table." BOSWELL. "No ; he'd think he could *try* them all." JOHNSON. "Yes, if he could catch them : but they'd try him much sooner. No, Sir ; were Socrates and Charles the Twelfth of

¹ When Johnson told this little anecdote to Sir Joshua Reynolds, he mentioned a circumstance which he omitted to-day — "Why," said Garrick, "it is as red as blood."

² The generosity of David Garrick to the late Mr. Berenger (see Vol. II. p. 17), who had fallen into distress by wit or by negligence, was as memorable. He sent him back his securities for £500, with a donation of a bank note of £300.—TYERS.

Sweden both present in any company, and Socrates to say 'Follow me, and hear a lecture in philosophy;' and Charles, laying his hand on his sword, to say, 'Follow me, and dethrone the Czar,' a man would be ashamed to follow Socrates. Sir, the impression is universal; yet it is strange. As to the sailor, when you look down from the quarter-deck to the space below, you see the utmost extremity of human misery; such crowding, such filth, such stench!" BOSWELL. "Yet, sailors are happy." JOHNSON. "They are happy as brutes are happy, with a piece of fresh meat—with the grossest sensuality. But, Sir, the profession of soldiers and sailors has the dignity of danger. Mankind reverence those who have got over fear, which is so general a weakness." SCOTT. "But is not courage mechanical, and to be acquired?" JOHNSON. "Why, yes, Sir, in a collective sense. Soldiers consider themselves only as part of a great machine." SCOTT. "We find people fond of being sailors." JOHNSON. "I cannot account for that, any more than I can account for other strange perversions of imagination." His abhorrence of the profession of a sailor was uniformly violent; but in conversation he always exalted the profession of a soldier. And yet I have, in my large and various collection of his writings, a letter to an eminent friend, in which he expresses himself thus:—"My godson called on me lately. He is weary, and rationally weary, of a military life. If you can place him in some other state, I think you may increase his happiness, and secure his virtue. A soldier's time is passed in distress and danger, or in idleness and corruption." Such was his cool reflection in his study; but whenever he was warmed and animated by the presence of company, he, like other philosophers, whose minds are impregnated with poetical fancy, caught the common enthusiasm for splendid renown.

He talked of Mr. Charles Fox, of whose abilities he thought highly, but observed, that he did not talk much at our Club. I have heard Mr. Gibbon remark, "that Mr. Fox could not be afraid of Dr. Johnson; yet he certainly was very shy of saying anything in Dr. Johnson's presence." Mr. Scott now quoted what was said of Alcibiades by a Greek poet, to which Johnson assented.¹

¹ Dr. Kearney, Archbishop of Raphoe, remarks, that "Mr. Boswell's memory must here have deceived him; and that Mr. Scott's observation must have been, that 'Mr. Fox, in the

He told us, that he had given Mrs. Montagu a catalogue of all Daniel Defoe's works of imagination ; most, if not all of which, as well as his other works, he now enumerated, allowing a considerable share of merit to a man, who, bred a tradesman, had written so variously and so well. Indeed, his "Robinson Crusoe" is enough of itself to establish his reputation.

He expressed great indignation at the imposture of the Cock-lane ghost, and related, with much satisfaction, how he had assisted in detecting the cheat, and had published an account of it in the newspapers. Upon this subject I incautiously offended him, by pressing him with too many questions, and he showed his displeasure. I apologised, saying, that "I asked questions in order to be instructed and entertained ; I repaired eagerly to the fountain ; but that the moment he gave me a hint, the moment he put a lock upon the well, I desisted." "But, Sir," said he, "that is forcing one to do a disagreeable thing :—" and he continued to rate me. "Nay, Sir," said I, "when you have put a lock upon the well, so that I can no longer drink, do not make the fountain of your wit play upon me and wet me."

He sometimes could not bear being teased with questions. I was once present when a gentleman¹ asked so many, as "What did you do, Sir?" "What did you say, Sir?" that he at last grew enraged, and said, "I will not be put to the *question*. Don't you consider, Sir, that these are not the manners of a gentleman? I will not be baited with *what* and *why*; what is this? what is that? why is a cow's tail long? why is a fox's tail bushy?" The gentleman, who was a good deal out of countenance, said, "Why, Sir, you are so good, that I venture to trouble you." JOHNSON. "Sir, my being so *good* is no reason why you should be so *ill*."

Talking of the Justitia hulk at Woolwich, in which criminals were punished, by being confined to labour, he said, "I do not see that they are punished by this ; they must have worked equally, had they never been guilty of stealing. They now only work ; so, after all,

instance mentioned, might be considered as the *reverse of Phæax* ;¹ of whom, as Plutarch relates in the Life of Alcibiades, Eupolis the tragedian said, It is true he can *talk*, and yet he is no *speaker*."—M.

¹ This was supposed to be Boswell himself.—C.

they have gained ; what they have stole is clear gain to them ; the confinement is nothing. Every man who works is confined : the smith to his shop, the tailor to his garret." BOSWELL. "And Lord Mansfield to his court." JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir. You know the notion of confinement may be extended, as in the song, 'Every island is a prison.' There is in Dodsley's collection a copy of verses to the author of that song."¹

Smith's Latin verses on Pococke, the great traveller,² were mentioned. He repeated some of them, and said they were Smith's best verses.

He talked with an uncommon animation of travelling into distant countries ; that the mind was enlarged by it, and that an acquisition of dignity of character was derived from it. He expressed a particular enthusiasm with respect to visiting the wall of China. I caught it for the moment, and said I really believed I should go and see the wall of China had I not children, of whom it was my duty to take care. "Sir," said he, "by doing so, you would do what would be of importance in raising your children to eminence. There would be a lustre reflected upon them from your spirit and curiosity. They would be at all times regarded as the children of a man who had gone to view the wall of China. I am serious, Sir."

When we had left Mr. Scott's, he said, "Will you go home with me?" "Sir," said I, "it is late ; but I'll go with you for three minutes." JOHNSON. "Or *four*." We went to Mrs. Williams's room, where we found Mr. Allen the printer, who was the landlord of his house in Bolt-court, a worthy, obliging man, and his very old acquaintance ; and what was exceedingly amusing, though he was of a very diminutive size, he used, even in Johnson's presence, to imitate the stately periods and slow and solemn utterance of the great man. I this evening boasted, that although I did not write

¹ I have in vain examined Dodsley's Collection for the verses here referred to. The song begins with the words, "Welcome, welcome, brother debtor."—M. It is in Ritson's Collection, vol. II. p. 105.—C.

Smith's verses are on Edward Pococke, the great Oriental linguist : he travelled, it is true, but Dr. Richard Pococke, late Bishop of Ossory, who published Travels through the East, is usually called the *great traveller*.—KEARNEY. Edward Pococke was Canon of Christchurch and Hebrew Professor in Oxford. The two Pocockes flourished just a century apart ; the one, Edward, being born in 1604 ; Richard, in 1704.—HALL.

what is called stenography, or short-hand, in appropriated characters devised for the purpose, I had a method of my own of writing half words, and leaving out some altogether, so as yet to keep the substance and language of any discourse which I had heard so much in view, that I could give it very completely soon after I had taken it down. He defied me, as he had once defied an actual short-hand writer ; and he made the experiment by reading slowly and distinctly a part of Robertson's "History of America," while I endeavoured to write it in my way of taking notes. It was found that I had it very imperfectly ; the conclusion from which was, that its excellence was principally owing to a studied arrangement of words, which could not be varied or abridged without an essential injury.

On Sunday, April 12, I found him at home before dinner ; Dr. Dodd's poem, entitled "Thoughts in Prison," was lying upon his table. This appearing to me an extraordinary effort by a man who was in Newgate for a capital crime, I was desirous to hear Johnson's opinion of it: to my surprise, he told me he had not read a line of it. I took up the book and read a passage to him. "JOHNSON. "Pretty well, if you are previously disposed to like them." I read another passage, with which he was better pleased. He then took the book into his own hands, and having looked at the prayer at the end of it, he said, "What *evidence* is there that this was composed the night before he suffered ? I do not believe it." He then read aloud where he prays for the king, &c. and observed, "Sir, do you think that a man, the night before he is to be hanged, cares for the succession of a royal family ? Though, he *may* have composed this prayer then. A man who has been canting all his life, may cant to the last. And yet a man who has been refused a pardon after so much petitioning, would hardly be praying thus fervently for the king."

He, and I, and Mrs. Williams, went to dine with the Reverend Dr. Percy. Talking of Goldsmith, Johnson said, he was very envious. I defended him, by observing, that he owned it frankly upon all occasions. JOHNSON. "Sir, you are enforcing the charge. He had so much envy, that he could not conceal it. He was so full of it, that he overflowed. He talked of it, to be sure, often enough. Now, Sir, what a man avows, he is not ashamed to think ; though

many a man thinks what he is ashamed to avow. We are all envious naturally ; but by checking envy, we get the better of it. So we are all thieves naturally ; a child always tries to get at what it wants the nearest way : by good instruction and good habits this is cured, till a man has not even an inclination to seize what is another's ; has no struggle with himself about it."

And here I shall record a scene of too much heat between Dr. Johnson and Dr. Percy, which I should have suppressed, were it not that it gave occasion to display the truly tender and benevolent heart of Johnson, who, as soon as he found a friend was at all hurt by anything which he had "said in his wrath," was not only prompt and desirous to be reconciled, but exerted himself to make ample reparation.

Books of travels having been mentioned, Johnson praised Pennant very highly, as he did at Dunvegan, in the Isle of Skye. Dr. Percy knowing himself to be the heir male of the ancient Percies,¹ and having the warmest and most dutiful attachment to the noble house of Northumberland, could not sit quietly and hear a man praised, who had spoken disrespectfully of Alnwick Castle and the duke's pleasure-grounds, especially as he thought meanly of his travels. He therefore opposed Johnson eagerly. JOHNSON. "Pennant, in what he has said of Alnwick,"² has done what he intended ; he has made you very angry." PERCY. "He has said the garden is trim, which is representing it like a citizen's parterre, when the truth is, there is a very large extent of fine turf and gravel walks." JOHNSON. "Ac-

¹ See this accurately stated, and the descent of his family from the Earls of Northumberland clearly deduced, in the Rev. Dr. Nash's excellent "History of Worcestershire," vol. II. p. 318. The doctor has subjoined a note, in which he says, "The editor hath seen, and carefully examined the proofs of all the particulars above mentioned, now in the possession of the Rev. Thomas Percy." The same proofs I have also myself carefully examined, and have seen some additional proofs which have occurred since the doctor's book was published : and both as a lawyer accustomed to the consideration of evidence, and as a genealogist versed in the study of pedigrees, I am fully satisfied. I cannot help observing, as a circumstance of no small moment, that in tracing the Bishop of Dromore's genealogy, essential aid was given by the late Elizabeth Duchess of Northumberland, heiress of that illustrious house : a lady not only of high dignity of spirit, such as became her noble blood, but of excellent understanding and lively talents. With a fair pride I can boast of the honour of her grace's correspondence, specimens of which adorn my archives.

² "At Alnwick no remains of chivalry are perceptible, no respectable train of attendants ; the furniture and gardens inconsistent, and nothing, except the numbers of *unindustrious* poor at the castle gate, excited any one idea of its former circumstances."—*Tour in Scotland*.

cording to your own account, Sir, Pennant is right. It is trim. Here is grass cut close, and gravel rolled smooth. Is not that trim? The extent is nothing against that; a mile may be as trim as a square yard. Your extent puts me in mind of the citizen's enlarged dinner, two pieces of roast beef, and two puddings. There is no variety, no mind exerted in laying out the ground, no trees." PERCY. "He pretends to give the natural history of Northumberland, and yet takes no notice of the immense number of trees planted there of late." JOHNSON. "That, Sir, has nothing to do with the *natural* history; that is *civil* history. A man who gives the natural history of the oak, is not to tell how many oaks have been planted in this place or that. A man who gives the natural history of the cow, is not to tell how many cows are milked at Islington. The animal is the same whether milked in the Park or at Islington." PERCY. "Pennant does not describe well; a carrier who goes along the side of Lochlomond would describe it better." JOHNSON. "I think he describes very well." PERCY. "I travelled after him." JOHNSON. "And I travelled after him." PERCY. "But, my good friend, you are short-sighted, and do not see so well as I do." I wondered at Dr. Percy's venturing thus. Dr. Johnson said nothing at the time; but inflammable particles were collecting for a cloud to burst. In a little while Dr. Percy said something more in disparagement of Pennant. JOHNSON. (pointedly). "This is the resentment of a narrow mind, because he did not find everything in Northumberland." PERCY. (feeling the stroke). "Sir, you may be as rude as you please." JOHNSON. "Hold, Sir! Don't talk of rudeness: remember, Sir, you told me," puffing hard with passion struggling for a vent, "I was short-sighted. We have done with civility. We are to be as rude as we please." PERCY. "Upon my honour, Sir, I did not mean to be uncivil." JOHNSON. "I cannot say so, Sir; for I *did* mean to be uncivil, thinking *you* had been uncivil." Dr. Percy rose, ran up to him, and taking him by the hand, assured him affectionately that his meaning had been misunderstood; upon which a reconciliation instantly took place. JOHNSON. "My dear Sir, I am willing you shall *hang* Pennant." PERCY. (resuming the former subject). "Pennant complains that the helmet is not hung out to invite to the hall of hospitality. Now I never heard that it was a

custom to hang out a *helmet*." ¹ JOHNSON. "Hang him up, hang him up." BOSWELL (humouring the joke). "Hang out his skull instead of a helmet, and you may drink ale out of it in your hall of Odin, as he is your enemy; that will be truly ancient. *There* will be 'Northern Antiquities.'" ² JOHNSON. "He's a *Whig*, Sir; a *sad dog*," smiling at his own violent expressions, merely for *political* difference of opinion: "but he's the best traveller I ever read; he observes more things than any one else does."

I could not help thinking that this was too high praise of a writer who traversed a wide extent of country in such haste, that he could put together only curt frittered fragments of his own, and afterwards procured supplemental intelligence from parochial ministers, and others not the best qualified or most partial narrators, whose ungenerous prejudice against the house of Stuart glares in misrepresentation; a writer, who at best treats merely of superficial objects, and shows no philosophical investigation of character and manners, such as Johnson has exhibited in his masterly "Journey" over part of the same ground; and who, it should seem from a desire of ingratiating himself with the Scotch, has flattered the people of North Britain so inordinately and with so little discrimination, that the judicious and candid amongst them must be disgusted, while they value more the plain, just, yet kindly report of Johnson.

Having impartially censured Mr. Pennant, as a traveller in Scotland, let me allow him, from authorities much better than mine, his deserved praise as an able zoologist; and let me also, from my own understanding and feelings, acknowledge the merit of his "London," which, though said to be not quite accurate in some particulars, is one of the most pleasing topographical performances that ever appeared in any language. Mr. Pennant, like his countrymen in general, has the true spirit of a *gentleman*. As a proof of it, I shall quote from his "London" the passage in which he speaks of my illustrious friend.

¹ It certainly was a custom, as appears from the following passage in "Perce-forest," vol. III. p. 198:—"Fasoient mettre au plus hault de leur hostel un *heaulme*, en signe que tout les gentils hommes et gentilles femmes entrassent hardiment en leur hostel comme en leur propre," &c.—KEARNEY.

² The title of a book translated by Dr. Percy.

"I must by no means omit *Bolt Court*, the long residence of Dr. Samuel Johnson, a man of the strongest natural abilities, great learning, a most retentive memory, of the deepest and most unaffected piety and morality, mingled with those numerous weaknesses and prejudices, which his friends have kindly taken care to draw from their dread abode.¹ I brought on myself his transient anger, by observing that in his tour in Scotland, he once had long and woful experience of oats being the food of men in Scotland, as they were of horses in England. It was a national reflection unworthy of him, and I shot my bolt. In turn he gave me a tender hug.² *Con amore* he also said of me, '*The dog is a Whig.*' I admired the virtues of Lord Russell, and pitied his fall. I should have been a Whig at the Revolution. There have been periods since in which I should have been, what I now am, a moderate Tory, a supporter, as far as my little influence extends, of a well-poised balance between the crown and the people; but should the scale preponderate against the *salus populi*, that moment may it be said, '*The dog's a Whig!*'"

We had a calm after the storm, staid the evening and supped, and were pleasant and gay. But Dr. Percy told me he was very uneasy at what had passed, for there was a gentleman there who was acquainted with the Northumberland family, to whom he hoped to have appeared more respectable, by showing how intimate he was with Dr. Johnson, and who might now, on the contrary, go away with an opinion to his disadvantage. He begged I would mention this to Dr. Johnson, which I afterwards did. His observation upon it was, "This comes of *stratagem*; had he told me that he wished to appear to advantage before that gentleman, he should have been at the top of the house all the time." He spoke of Dr. Percy in the handsomest manner. "Then, Sir," said I, "may I be allowed to suggest a mode by which you may effectually counteract any unfavourable report of what passed? I will write a letter to you upon the subject of the unlucky contest of that day, and you will be kind enough to put in writing, as an answer to that letter, what you have now said, and as Lord Percy is to dine with us at General Paoli's soon, I will take an opportunity to read the correspondence

¹ This is the common cant against faithful biography. Does the worthy gentleman mean that I, who was taught discrimination of character by Johnson, should have omitted his frailties, and, in short have *bedaubed* him, as the worthy gentleman has bedaubed Scotland?

² See Dr. Johnson's "Journey to the Western Islands," p. 296; see his Dictionary article, *oats*; and my "Voyage to the Hebrides," first edition.—PENNANT.

³ See Mr. Boswell's Journal.—PENNANT.

in his lordship's presence." This friendly scheme was accordingly carried into execution without Dr. Percy's knowledge. Johnson's letter placed Dr. Percy's unquestionable merit in the fairest point of view ; and I contrived that Lord Percy should hear the correspondence, by introducing it at General Paoli's as an instance of Dr. Johnson's kind disposition toward one in whom his lordship was interested. Thus every unfavourable impression was obviated that could possibly have been made on those by whom he wished most to be regarded. I breakfasted the day after with him, and informed him of my scheme, and its happy completion, for which he thanked me in the warmest terms, and was highly delighted with Dr. Johnson's letter in his praise, of which I gave him a copy. He said, "I would rather have this than degrees from all the universities in Europe. It will be for me, and my children, and grandchildren." Dr. Johnson having afterwards asked me if I had given him a copy of it, and being told I had, was offended, and insisted that I should get it back, which I did. As, however, he did not desire me to destroy either the original or the copy, or forbid me to let it be seen, I think myself at liberty to apply to it his general declaration to me concerning his own letters, "That he did not choose they should be published in his life-time ; but had no objection to their appearing after his death." I shall therefore insert this kindly correspondence, having faithfully narrated the circumstances accompanying it.

LETTER 319.

FROM MR. BOSWELL.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I beg leave to address you in behalf of our friend Dr. Percy, who was much hurt by what you said to him that day we dined at his house (April 12) ; when, in the course of the dispute as to Pennant's merit as a traveller, you told Percy that 'he had the resentment of a narrow mind against Pennant, because he did not find everything in Northumberland. Percy is sensible that you did not mean to injure him ; but he is vexed to think that your behaviour to him on that occasion may be interpreted as a proof that he is despised by you, which I know is not the case. I have told him, that the charge of being narrow minded was only as to the particular point in question ; and that he had the merit of being a martyr to his noble family.

"Earl Percy is to dine with General Paoli next Friday ; and I should be sincerely glad to have it in my power to satisfy his lordship how well you think of Dr. Percy, who, I find, apprehends that your good opinion of him may be of

very essential consequence; and who assures me that he has the highest respect and the warmest affection for you.

"I have only to add, that my suggesting this occasion for the exercise of your candour and generosity is altogether unknown to Dr. Percy, and proceeds from my good-will towards him and my persuasion that you will be happy to do him an essential kindness. I am more and more, my dear Sir, your most faithful and affectionate humble servant,

"JAMES BOSWELL."

LETTER 320.

TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"April 28, 1778.

"SIR,—The debate between Dr. Percy and me is one of those foolish controversies which begin upon a question of which neither party cares how it is decided, and which is, nevertheless, continued to acrimony, by the vanity with which every man resists confutation. Dr. Percy's warmth proceeded from a cause which perhaps does him more honour than he could have derived from juster criticism. His abhorrence of Pennant proceeded from his opinion that Pennant had wantonly and indecently censured his patron. His anger made him resolve, that for having been once wrong, he never should be right. Pennant has much in his notions that I do not like; but still I think him a very intelligent traveller. If Percy is really offended, I am sorry; for he is a man whom I never knew to offend any one. He is a man very willing to learn, and very able to teach; a man out of whose company I never go without having learned something. It is sure that he vexes me sometimes, but I am afraid it is by making me feel my own ignorance. So much extension of mind, and so much minute accuracy of inquiry, if you survey your whole circle of acquaintance, you will find so scarce, if you find it at all, that you will value Percy by comparison. Lord Hailes is somewhat like him: but Lord Hailes does not, perhaps, go beyond him in research; and I do not know that he equals him in elegance. Percy's attention to poetry has given grace and splendour to his studies of antiquity. A mere antiquarian is a rugged being.

"Upon the whole, you see that what I might say in sport or petulance to him, is very consistent with full conviction of his merit. I am, dear Sir your most, &c.

"SAM JOHNSON."

LETTER 321. FROM MR. BOSWELL TO DR. PERCY

"South Audley Street, April 25.

"DEAR SIR,—I wrote to Dr. Johnson on the subject of the *Pennantian* controversy; and have received from him an answer which will delight you. I read it yesterday to Dr. Robertson, at the Exhibition; and at dinner to Lord Percy, General Oglethorpe, &c. who dined with us at General Paoli's; who was also a witness to the high *testimony* to your honour.

"General Paoli desires the favor of your company next Tuesday to dinner, to meet Dr. Johnson. If I can, I will call on you to-day. I am with sincere regard, your most obedient humble servant,

"JAMES BOSWELL." 1

Though the Bishop of Dromore kindly answered the letters which I wrote to him, relative to Dr. Johnson's early history; yet, for justice to him, I think it proper to add, that the account of the foregoing conversation, and the subsequent transaction, as well as of some other conversations in which he is mentioned, has been given to the public without previous communication with his lordship.

CHAPTER XIX.

1778.

"Chapter concerning Snakes"—Styles in Painting and Writing—George Steevens—Luxury—Different Governments—Maccaronic Verses—Cookery Books—Inequality of the Sexes—Degrees of Happiness—Soame Jenyns's "Internal Evidence"—Courage—Friendship—Free Will—Mandeville—"Private Vices public Benefits"—Hannah More—Mason's Prosecution of Mr. Murray the Bookseller—Fear of Death—Annihilation—Future State of Existence—Wesley's Ghost Story—Jane Harry—Change of Religion—Mrs. Knowles.

ON Monday, April, 13, I dined with Johnson at Mr. Langton's where were Dr. Porteus, then Bishop of Chester, afterwards of London, and Dr. Stinton.¹ He was at first in a very silent mood. Before dinner he said nothing but "Pretty baby," to one of the children. Langton said very well to me afterwards, that he could repeat Dr. Johnson's conversation before dinner, as Johnson had said that he could repeat a complete chapter of "The Natural History of Iceland," from the Danish of *Horrebow*, the whole of which was exactly thus :—

"Chap. LXXII.—*Concerning Snakes.*

"There are no snakes to be met with throughout the whole island."

At dinner we talked of another mode in the newspapers of giving modern characters in sentences from the classics, and of the passage—

"Parcus deorum cultor, et infrequens,
Insanientis dum sapientiæ
Consultus erro, nunc retrorsum
Vela dare, atque iterare curæ
Coger relictos,"²

¹ Dr. Stinton had been Dr. Porteus's fellow chaplain to Archbishop Secker, and was his sole biographer in the publication of their patron's works.—C.

² "A fugitive from heaven and prayer,
I mock'd at all religious fear,
Deep scienc'd in the mazy lore
Of mad philosophy ; but now
Hoist sail, and back my voyage plow
To that blest harbour which I left before."—FRANCK.

being well applied to Soame Jenyns ; who, after having wandered in the wilds of infidelity, had returned to the Christian faith. Mr. Langton asked Johnson as to the propriety of *sapientiæ consultus*. JOHNSON. "Though *consultus* was primarily an adjective, like *amicus* it came to be used as a substantive. So we have *Juris consultus*, a consult in law."

We talked of the styles of different painters, and how certainly a connoisseur could distinguish them. I asked if there was as clear a difference of style in language as in painting, or even as in hand-writing, so that the composition of every individual may be distinguished? JOHNSON. "Yes. Those who have a style of eminent excellence, such as Dryden and Milton, can always be distinguished." I had no doubt of this ; but what I wanted to know was, whether there was really a peculiar style to every man whatever, as there is certainly a peculiar hand-writing, a peculiar countenance, not widely different in many, yet always enough to be distinctive :—

"—————facies non omnibus una,
Nec diversa tamen."

The bishop thought not ; and said, he supposed that many pieces in Dodsley's collection of poems, though all very pretty, had nothing appropriated in their style, and in that particular could not be at all distinguished. JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, I think every man whatever has a peculiar style, which may be discovered by nice examination and comparison with others : but a man must write a great deal to make his style obviously discernible. As logicians say, this appropriation of style is infinite *in potestate*, limited *in actu*."

Mr. Topham Beauclerk came in the evening, and he and Dr. Johnson and I staid to supper. It was mentioned that Dr. Dodd¹

¹ Miss Reynolds and Sir J. Hawkins doubted whether Johnson had ever been in Dodd's company ; but Johnson told Boswell (*ante*, Vol. III. p. 324) that "he had once been." I have now before me a letter, dated in 1750, from Dr. Dodd to his friend the Rev. Mr. Parkhurst, the lexicographer, mentioning this meeting ; and his account, at that day, of the man with whom he was afterward to have so painful a correspondence, is interesting and curious :—

"I spent yesterday afternoon with Johnson, the celebrated author of *The Rambler*, who is of all others the oddest and most peculiar fellow I ever saw. He is six feet high, has a violent convulsion in his head, and his eyes are distorted. He speaks roughly and loud, listens to no man's opinions, thoroughly pertinacious of his own. Good sense flows from him in all he utters, and he seems possessed of a prodigious fund of knowledge, which he is not at all

had once wished to be a member of the LITERARY CLUB. JOHNSON. "I should be sorry if any of our Club were hanged. I will not say but some of them deserve it." BEAUCLERK (supposing this to be aimed at persons for whom he had at that time a wonderful fancy, which, however, did not last long) was irritated, and eagerly said, "You, Sir, have a friend (naming him) who deserves to be hanged ; for he speaks behind their backs against those with whom he lives on the best terms, and attacks them in the newspapers. *He* certainly ought to be *kicked*." JOHNSON. "Sir, we all do this in some degree : '*Veniam petimus damusque vicissim*.' To be sure it may be done so much, that a man may deserve to be kicked." BEAUCLERK. "He is very malignant." JOHNSON. "No, Sir, he is not malignant. He is mischievous, if you will. He would do no man an essential injury ; he may, indeed, love to make sport of people by vexing their vanity. I, however, once knew an old gentleman who was absolutely malignant. He really wished evil to others, and rejoiced at it." BOSWELL. "The gentleman Mr. Beauclerk, against whom you are so violent, is, I know, a man of good principles." BEAUCLERK. "Then he does not wear them out in practice."

Dr. Johnson, who, as I have observed before, delighted in discrimination of character, and having a masterly knowledge of human nature, was willing to take men as they are, imperfect, and with a mixture of good and bad qualities, I suppose thought he had said enough in defence of his friend, of whose merits, notwithstanding his exceptionable points, he had a just value : and added no more on the subject.

On Tuesday, April 14, I dined with him at General Oglethorpe's, with General Paoli and Mr. Langton. General Oglethorpe declaimed against luxury. JOHNSON. "Depend upon it, Sir, every state of society is as luxurious as it can be. Men always take the best they can get." OGLETHORPE. "But the best depends much upon ourselves ; and if we can be as well satisfied with plain things,

reserved in communicating ; but in a manner so obstinate, ungenteel, and boorish, as renders it disagreeable and dissatisfactory. In short, it is impossible for words to describe him. He seems often inattentive to what passes in company, and then looks like a person possessed by some superior spirit. I have been reflecting on him ever since I saw him. He is a man of most universal and surprising genius, but in himself particular beyond expression."—C.

we are in the wrong to accustom our palates to what is high seasoned and expensive. What says Addison in his 'Cato,' speaking of the Numidian ?

'Coarse are his meals, the fortune of the chase;
Amid the running stream he slakes his thirst,
Toils all the day, and at the approach of night,
On the first friendly bank he throws him down,
Or rests his head upon a rock till morn;
And if the following day he chance to find
A new repast, or an untasted spring,
Blesses his stars, and thinks it luxury.'

Let us have *that* kind of luxury, Sir, if you will." JOHNSON. "But hold, Sir; to be merely satisfied is not enough. It is in refinement and elegance that the civilized man differs from the savage. A great part of our industry, and all our ingenuity, is exercised in procuring pleasure; and, Sir, a hungry man has not the same pleasure in eating a plain dinner, that a hungry man has in eating a luxurious dinner. You see I put the case fairly. A hungry man may have as much, nay, more pleasure in eating a plain dinner, than a man grown fastidious has in eating a luxurious dinner. But I suppose the man who decides between the two dinners to be equally a hungry man."

Talking of the different governments,—JOHNSON. "The more contracted power is, the more easily it is destroyed. A country governed by a despot is an inverted cone. Government there cannot be so firm as when it rests upon a broad basis gradually contracted, as the government of Great Britian, which is founded on the parliament, then is in the privy council, then in the king." BOSWELL. "Power, when contracted into the person of a despot, may be easily destroyed, as the prince may be cut off. So Caligula wished that the people of Rome had but one neck, that he might cut them off at a blow." OGLETHORPE. "It was of the senate he wished that. The senate by its usurpation controlled both the emperor and the people. And don't you think that we see too much of that in our own parliament?"

Dr. Johnson endeavoured to trace the etymology of *Maccaroni* verses, which he thought were of Italian invention, from *Maccaroni*,

but on being informed that this would infer that they were the most common and easy verses, macaroni being the most ordinary and simple food, he was at a loss ; for he said, " He rather should have supposed it to import in its primitive signification, a composition of several things ;¹ for Maccaronic verses are verses made out of a mixture of different languages, that is, of one language with the termination of another." I suppose we scarcely know of a language in any country, where there is any learning, in which that motley ludicrous species of composition may not be found. It is particularly droll in Low Dutch. The "*Polemo-middenia*" of Drummond, of Hawthornden, in which there is a jumble of many languages moulded, as if it were all in Latin, is well known. Mr. Langton made us laugh heartily at one in the Grecian mould, by Joshua Barnes, in which are to be found such comical *Anglo-hellenisms* as *κλυβοισιν εβανχθεν* : they were banged with clubs.

On Wednesday, April 15, I dined with Dr Johnson at Mr. Dilly's, and was in high spirits, for I had been a good part of the morning with Mr. Orme, the able and eloquent historian of Hindostan, who expressed a great admiration of Johnson. " I do not care," said he, " on what subject Johnson talks ; but I love better to hear him talk than anybody. He either gives you new thoughts, or a new colouring. It is a shame to the nation that he has not been more liberally rewarded. Had I been George the Third, and thought as he did about America, I would have given Johnson three hundred a year for his 'Taxation no Tyranny,' alone." I repeated this, and Johnson was much pleased with such praise from such a man as Orme.

At Mr. Dilly's to-day were Mrs. Knowles, the ingenious quaker lady, Miss Seward, the poetess of Lichfield, the Reverend Dr. Mayo, and the Rev. Mr. Beresford, tutor to the Duke of Bedford. Before dinner Dr. Johnson seized upon Mr. Charles Sheridan's² " Account

¹ Dr. Johnson was right in supposing that this kind of poetry derived its name from *maccherone*. " Ars ista poetica (says Merlin Coccaie, whose true name was Theophilo Folengo) nuncupatur ars macaronica, a *macaronibus* derivata ; qui *macarones* sunt quoddam pulmentum, farina, caseo, butyro compaginaturn, grossum, rude, et rusticanturn. Ideo macaronica nil nisi grossedinem, ruditatem, et vocabulazzos debet in se continere." Warton's Hist. of Eng. Poet. ii. 357. Folengo's assumed name was taken up in consequence of his having been instructed in his youth by Virago Coccalo. He died in 1544.—M.

² The elder brother of Mr. Richard Brinsley Sheridan. He died in 1806.—M.

of the late Revolution in Sweden," and seemed to read it ravenously, as if he devoured it, which was to all appearance his method of studying. "He knows how to read better than any one," says Mrs Knowles; "he gets at the substance of a book directly; he tears out the heart of it." He kept it wrapt up in the tablecloth in his lap during the time of dinner, from an avidity to have one entertainment in readiness, when he should have finished another; resembling (if I may use so coarse a simile) a dog who holds a bone in his paws in reserve, while he eats something else which has been thrown to him.

The subject of cookery having been very naturally introduced at a table where Johnson, who boasted of the niceness of his palate, owned that "he always found a good dinner," he said, "I could write a better book of cookery than has ever yet been written; it should be a book upon philosophical principles. Pharmacy is now made much more simple. Cookery may be made so too. A prescription which is now compounded of five ingredients, had formerly fifty in it. So in cookery, if the nature of the ingredients be well known, much fewer will do. Then, as you cannot make bad meat good, I would tell what is the best butcher's meat, the best beef, the best pieces; how to choose young fowls; the proper seasons of different vegetables; and then how to roast and boil and compound." DILLY. "Mrs. Glasse's '*Cookery*,' which is the best, was written by Dr. Hill. Half the *trade*¹ know this." JOHNSON. "Well, Sir, this shows how much better the subject of cookery may be treated by a philosopher. I doubt if the book be written by Dr. Hill; for, in Mrs. Glasse's '*Cookery*,' which I have looked into, salt-petre and sal-prunella are spoken of as different substances, whereas sal-prunella is only salt-petre burnt on charcoal; and Hill could not be ignorant of this. However, as the greatest part of such a book is made by transcription, this mistake may have been carelessly adopted. But you shall see what a book of cookery I shall make: I shall agree with Mr. Dilly for the copyright." MISS SEWARD. "That would be Hercules with the distaff indeed." JOHNSON. "No,

¹ As physicians are called *the faculty*, and counsellors at law *the profession*, the book sellers of London are denominated *the trade*. Johnson disapproved of these denominations.

Madam. Women can spin very well ; but they cannot make a good book of cookery."

JOHNSON. "O ! Mr. Dilly—you must know that an English Benedictine monk¹ at Paris has translated 'The Duke of Berwick's Memoirs,' from the original French, and has sent them to me to sell. I offered them to Strahan, who sent them back with this answer ;— 'That the first book he had published was the Duke of Berwick's Life, by which he had lost : and he hated the name.' Now I honestly tell you that Strahan has refused them ; but I also honestly tell you that he did it upon no principle for he never looked into them." DILLY. "Are they well translated, Sir ?" JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, very well ; in a style very current and clear. I have written to the Benedictine to give me an answer upon two points. What evidence is there that the letters are authentic ? (for if they are not authentic, they are nothing.) And how long will it be before the original French is published ? For if the French edition is not to appear for a considerable time, the translation will be almost as valuable as an original book. They will make two volumes in octavo ; and I have undertaken to correct every sheet as it comes from the press." Mr. Dilly desired to see them, and said he would send for them. He asked Dr. Johnson if he would write a preface to them. JOHNSON. "No, Sir The Benedictines were very kind to me, and I'll do what I undertook to do ; but I will not mingle my name with them. I am to gain nothing by them. I'll turn them loose upon the world, and let them take their chance." DR. MAYO. "Pray, Sir, are Ganganelli's letters authentic ?" JOHNSON. "No, Sir. Voltaire put the same question to the editor of them² that I did to Macpherson—Where are the originals ?"

Mrs. Knowles affected to complain that men had much more liberty allowed them than women. JOHNSON. "Why, Madam, women have all the liberty they should wish to have. We have all the labour and the danger, and the women all the advantage. We go to sea, we build houses, we do everything, in short, to pay our court to the women." MRS. KNOWLES. "The Doctor reasons very

¹ The Abbé Hook. They were published, in 1779, by Cadell.—MACKINTOSH.

² The Marquis Caracciolo—generally supposed to have been the fabricator of these celebrated letters.

whitely, but not convincingly. Now, take the instance of building : the mason's wife, if she is ever seen in liquor, is ruined : the mason may get himself drunk as often as he pleases, with little loss of character ; nay, may let his wife and children starve." JOHNSON. "Madam, you must consider, if the mason does get himself drunk, and let his wife and children starve, the parish will oblige him to find security for their maintenance. We have different modes of restraining evil. Stocks for the men, a ducking-stool for the women, and a pound for beasts. If we require more perfection from women than from ourselves, it is doing them honour. And women have not the same temptations that we have ; they may always live in virtuous company ; men must mix in the world indiscriminately. If a woman has no inclination to do what is wrong, being secured from it is no restraint to her. I am at liberty to walk into the Thames ; but if I were to try it, my friends would restrain me in Bedlam, and I should be obliged to them." MRS. KNOWLES. "Still, Doctor, I cannot help thinking it a hardship that more indulgence is allowed to men than to women. It gives a superiority to men, to which I do not see how they are entitled." JOHNSON. "It is plain, Madam, one or other must have the superiority. As Shakspeare says, 'If two men ride on a horse, one must ride behind.'" DILLY. "I suppose, Sir, Mrs. Knowles would have them ride in panniers, one on each side." JOHNSON. "Then, Sir, the horse would throw them both." MRS. KNOWLES. "Well, I hope that in another world the sexes will be equal." BOSWELL. "That is being too ambitious, Madam. We might as well desire to be equal with the angels. We shall all, I hope, be happy in a future state, but we must not expect to be all happy in the same degree. It is enough, if we be happy according to our several capacities. A worthy carman will get to heaven as well as Sir Isaac Newton. Yet, though equally good, they will not have the same degrees of happiness." JOHNSON. "Probably not."¹

Upon this subject I had once before sounded him by mentioning the late Reverend Mr. Brown of Utrecht's image ; that a great and

¹ See on this question Bishop Hall's Epistles, dec. iii. epist. 6—"Of the different degrees of heavenly glory, and of our mutual knowledge of each other above ;" and vol. ii. p. 7, where also this subject is discussed.—M.

small glass, thought equally full, did not hold an equal quantity ; which he threw out to refute David Hume's saying, that a little miss, going to dance at a ball, in a fine new dress, was as happy as a great orator, after having made an eloquent and applauded speech. After some thought, Johnson said, " I come over to the parson." As an instance of coincidence of thinking, Mr. Dilly told me, that Dr. King, a late dissenting minister in London, said to him, upon the happiness in a future state of good men of different capacities, " A pail does not hold so much as a tub ; but, if it be equally full, it has no reason to complain. Every saint in heaven will have as much happiness as he can hold." Mr. Dilly thought this a clear, though a familiar, illustration of the phrase, " One star differeth from another in brightness." (Cor. xv. 41.)

Dr. Mayo having asked Johnson's opinion of Soame Jenyns's " View of the Internal Evidence of the Christian Religion"—JOHNSON. " I think it a pretty book ; not very theological, indeed ; and there seems to be an affectation of ease and carelessness, as if it were not suitable to his character to be very serious about the matter." BOSWELL. " He may have intended this to introduce his book the better among genteel people, who might be unwilling to read too grave a treatise. There is a general levity in the age. We have physicians now with bag-wigs ; may we not have airy divines, at least somewhat less solemn in their appearance than they used to be ?" JOHNSON. " Jenyns might mean as you say." BOSWELL. " You should like his book, Mrs. Knowles, as it maintains, as your *friends* do, that courage is not a Christian virtue." MRS. KNOWLES. " Yes, indeed, I like him there ; but I cannot agree with him that friendship is not a Christian virtue." JOHNSON. " Why, Madam, strictly speaking, he is right. All friendship is preferring the interest of a friend to the neglect, or, perhaps, against the interest, of others ; so that an old Greek said, ' He that has *friends* has no friend.' Now Christianity recommends universal benevolence ; to consider all men as our brethren ; which is contrary to the virtue of friendship, as described by the ancient philosophers. Surely, Madam, your sect must approve of this ; for you call all men *friends*." MRS. KNOWLES. " We are commanded to do good to all men, ' but especially to them who are of the household of faith.' "

JOHNSON. "Well, Madam; the household of faith is wide enough." MRS. KNOWLES. "But, Doctor, our Saviour had twelve apostles, yet there was *one* whom he *loved*. John was called the 'the disciple whom Jesus loved.'" JOHNSON (with eyes sparkling benignantly). "Very well indeed, Madam. You have said very well." BOSWELL. "A fine application. Pray, Sir, had you ever thought of it?" JOHNSON. "I had not, Sir."

From this pleasing subject, he, I know not how or why, made a sudden transition to one upon which he was a violent aggressor; for he said, "I am willing to love all mankind, *except an American*;" and his inflammable corruption bursting into horrid fire, he "breathed out threatenings and slaughter;" calling them "rascals, robbers, pirates," and exclaiming, he'd "burn and destroy them." Miss Seward, looking to him with mild but steady astonishment, said, "Sir, this is an instance that we are always most violent against those whom we have injured." He was irritated still more by this delicate and keen reproach; and roared out another tremendous volley, which one might fancy could be heard across the Atlantic. During this tempest I sat in great uneasiness, lamenting his heat of temper, till by degrees, I diverted his attention to other topics.

DR. MAYO (to Dr. Johnson). "Pray, Sir, have you read Edwards, of New England, on *Grace*?" JOHNSON. "No, Sir." BOSWELL. "It puzzled me so much as to the freedom of the human will, by stating, with wonderful acute ingenuity, our being actuated by a series of motives which we cannot resist, that the only relief I had was to forget it." MAYO. "But he makes the proper distinction between moral and physical necessity." BOSWELL. "Alas! Sir, they come both to the same thing. You may be bound as hard by

¹ Dr. Mayo, no doubt, meant, "A Careful and Strict Enquiry into the Modern prevailing Notions that Freedom of Will is essential to Moral Agency," by the Rev. Jonathan Edwards, President of the College of New Jersey. Of this work, Sir James Mackintosh (who so kindly assisted me in my edition of Boswell, and whose loss the literary and political world now lament) observes, in his autobiography: "Robert Hall's society and conversation had a great influence on my mind. He led me to the perusal of Jonathan Edwards's work on Free Will, which Dr. Priestley had pointed out before. I am sorry that I never yet read the other works of that most extraordinary man, who, in a metaphysical age or country, would certainly have been deemed as much the boast of America as his great countryman Franklin."—*Mem. of Mackintosh*, v. i. p. 14.—C. 1835.

chains when covered by leather, as when the iron appears. The argument for the moral necessity of human actions is always, I observe, fortified by supposing universal prescience to be one of the attributes of the Deity." JOHNSON. "You are surer that you are free, than you are of prescience ; you are surer that you can lift up your finger or not as you please, than you are of any conclusion from a deduction of reasoning. But let us consider a little the objection from prescience. It is certain I am either to go home to night or not : that does not prevent my freedom." BOSWELL. "That it is certain you are *either* to go home or not, does not prevent your freedom : because the liberty of choice between the two is compatible with certainty. But if *one* of these events be certain *now*, you have no *future* power of volition. If it be certain you are to go home to-night, you *must* go home." JOHNSON. "If I am well acquainted with a man, I can judge with great probability how he will act in any case, without his being restrained by my judging. God may have this probability increased to certainty." BOSWELL. "When it is increased to *certainty*, freedom ceases, because that cannot be certainly foreknown which is not certain at the time ; but if it be certain at the time, it is a contradiction in terms to maintain that there can be afterwards any *contingency* dependent upon the exercise of will or anything else." JOHNSON. "All theory is against the freedom of the will ; all experience for it." I did not push the subject any farther. I was glad to find him so mild in discussing a question of the most abstract nature, involved with theological tenets which he generally would not suffer to be in any degree opposed.¹

He as usual defended luxury : "You cannot spend money in luxury without doing good to the poor. Nay, you do more good to them by spending it in luxury ; you make them exert industry, whereas by giving it you keep them idle. I own, indeed, there may be more virtue in giving it immediately in charity, than in spending it in luxury ; though there may be pride in that too." Miss Seward asked, if this was not Mandeville's doctrine of "private vices,

¹ If any of my readers are disturbed by this thorny question, I beg leave to recommend to them Letter 69 of Montesquieu's *Lettres Persannes*, and the late Mr. John Palmer of Islington's Answer to Dr. Priestley's mechanical arguments for what he absurdly calls "philosophical necessity."

public benefits." JOHNSON. "The fallacy of that book is, that Mandeville defines neither vices nor benefits. He reckons among vices everything that gives pleasure. He takes the narrowest system of morality, monastic morality, which holds pleasure itself to be a vice, such as eating salt with our fish, because it makes it eat better ; and he reckons wealth as a public benefit, which is by no means always true. Pleasure itself is not a vice. Having a garden, which we all know to be perfectly innocent, is a great pleasure. At the same time, in this state of being there are many pleasures vices, which, however, are so immediately agreeable that we can hardly abstain from them. The happiness of heaven will be, that pleasure and virtue will be perfectly consistent. Mandeville puts the case of a man who gets drunk at an alehouse ; and says it is a public benefit, because so much money is got by it to the public. But it must be considered, that all the good gained by this, through the gradation of alehouse-keeper, brewer, maltster, and farmer, is overbalanced by the evil caused to the man and his family by his getting drunk. This is the way to try what is vicious, by ascertaining whether more evil than good is produced by it upon the whole, which is the case in all vice. It may happen that good is produced by vice, but not as vice ; for instance, a robber may take money from its owner, and give it to one who will make a better use of it. Here is good produced ; but not by the robbery as robbery, but as translation of property. I read Mandeville forty or, I believe, fifty years ago. He did not puzzle me ; he opened my views into real life very much. No, it is clear that the happiness of society depends on virtue. In Sparta, theft was allowed by general consent ; theft, therefore, *was there* not a crime ; but then there was no security ; and what a life must they have had, when there was no security ! Without truth there must be a dissolution of society. As it is, there is so little truth, that we are almost afraid to trust to our ears : but how should we be, if falsehood were multiplied ten times ! Society is held together by communication, and information ; and I remember this remark of Sir Thomas Brown's, ' Do the devils lie ? No ; for then hell could not subsist.' "

Talking of Miss ——,¹ a literary lady, he said, " I was obliged to

¹ Hannah More.—*Malone MS.—C.*

speak to Miss Reynolds, to let her know that I desired she would not flatter me so much." Somebody now observed, "She flatters Garrick." JOHNSON. "She is in the right to flatter Garrick. She is in the right for two reasons; first, because she has the world with her, who have been praising Garrick these thirty years; and, secondly, because she is rewarded for it by Garrick.¹ Why should she flatter *me*? I can do nothing for her. Let her carry her praise to a better market." Then turning to Mrs. Knowles, "You, Madam, have been flattering me all the evening; I wish you would give Boswell a little now. If you knew his merit as well as I do, you would say a great deal: he is the best travelling companion in the world."

Somebody mentioned the Reverend Mr. Mason's prosecution of Mr Murray, the bookseller,² for having inserted in a collection of "Gray's Poems" only fifty lines, of which Mr. Mason had still the exclusive property, under the statute of Queen Anne; and that Mr. Mason had persevered notwithstanding his being requested to name his own terms of compensation.³ Johnson signified his displeasure at Mr. Mason's conduct very strongly; but added, by way of showing that he was not surprised at it, "Mason's a Whig!" MRS. KNOWLES (not hearing distinctly). "What! a prig, Sir?" JOHNSON. "Worse, Madam; a Whig! But he is both!"

I expressed a horror at the thought of death. MRS. KNOWLES. "Nay, thou shouldst not have a horror for what is the gate of life." JOHNSON (standing upon the hearth, rolling about, with a serious, solemn, and somewhat gloomy air). "No rational man can die without uneasy apprehension." MRS. KNOWLES. "The Scriptures tell us, 'The righteous shall have *hope* in his death.'" JOHNSON. "Yes,

¹ Johnson probably means either that Garrick repaid her in her own coin, or helped her in bringing out her play; or, finally, by introducing her into general society. It is not to be wondered at that an inexperienced young lady, suddenly transported from obscure provincial life into the elegance and splendour of the best literary circles of London, should have at first indulged in some extravagant admiration both of Johnson and Garrick; but it appears from her letters, that her admiration was at least sincere, and that for Johnson she entertained and expressed it before she ever saw him, and when she could not expect him to hear of it again.—C. 1835.

² Mr. Murray was a spirited and intelligent bookseller, the father of the publisher of this work.—C.

³ See "A Letter to W. Mason, A.M., from J. Murray, Bookseller in London," second edition, p. 20.

Madam, that is, he shall not have despair. But consider, his hope of salvation must be founded on the terms on which it is promised that the mediation of our Saviour shall be applied to us—namely, obedience; and where obedience has failed, then, as suppletory to it, repentance. But what man can say that his obedience has been such as he would approve of in another, or even in himself, upon close examination, or that his repentance has not been such as to require being repented of? No man can be sure that his obedience and repentance will obtain salvation.” MRS. KNOWLES. “But divine intimation of acceptance may be made to the soul.” JOHNSON. “Madam, it may; but I should not think the better of a man who should tell me on his death-bed, he was sure of salvation. A man cannot be sure himself that he has divine intimation of acceptance: much less can he make others sure that he has it.” BOSWELL. “Then, Sir, we must be contented to acknowledge that death is a terrible thing.” JOHNSON. “Yes, Sir. I have made no approaches to a state which can look on it as not terrible.” MRS. KNOWLES (seeming to enjoy a pleasing serenity in the persuasion of benignant divine light). “Does not St. Paul say, ‘I have fought the good fight of faith, I have finished my course; henceforth is laid up for me a crown of life?’” JOHNSON. “Yes, Madam; but here was a man inspired, a man who had been converted by supernatural interposition.” BOSWELL. “In prospect death is dreadful; but in fact we find that people die easy.” JOHNSON. “Why, Sir, most people have not *thought* much of the matter, so cannot *say* much, and it is supposed they die easy. Few believe it certain they are then to die; and those who do set themselves to behave with resolution, as a man does who is going to be hanged;—he is not the less unwilling to be hanged.” MISS SEWARD. “There is one mode of the fear of death, which is certainly absurd; and that is the dread of annihilation, which is only a pleasing sleep without a dream.” JOHNSON. “It is neither pleasing nor sleep; it is nothing. Now, mere existence is so much better than nothing, that one would rather exist even in pain, than not exist.” BOSWELL. “If annihilation be nothing, then existing in pain is not a comparative state, but is a positive evil, which I cannot think we should choose. I must be allowed to differ here, and it would lessen the hope of a future

state founded on the argument, that the Supreme Being, who is good as he is great, will hereafter compensate for our present sufferings in this life. For if existence, such as we have it here, be comparatively a good, we have no reason to complain, though no more of it should be given to us. But if our only state of existence were in this world, then we might with some reason complain that we are so dissatisfied with our enjoyments compared with our desires." JOHNSON. "The lady confounds annihilation, which is nothing, with the apprehension of it, which is dreadful. It is in the apprehension of it that the horror of annihilation consists."

Of John Wesley he said, "He can talk well on any subject." BOSWELL. "Pray, Sir, what has he made of his story of a ghost?" JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, he believes it; but not on sufficient authority. He did not take time enough to examine the girl. It was at Newcastle where the ghost was said to have appeared to a young woman several times, mentioning something about the right to an old house; advising application to be made to an attorney, which was done; and at the same time, saying the attorney would do nothing, which proved to be the fact. 'This,' says John, 'is a proof that a ghost knows our thoughts.' Now" (laughing), "it is not necessary to know our thoughts, to tell that an attorney will sometimes do nothing. Charles Wesley, who is a more stationary man, does not believe the story. I am sorry that John did not take more pains to enquire into the evidence for it." MISS SEWARD (with an incredulous smile). "What, Sir! about a ghost!" JOHNSON (with solemn vehemence). "Yes, Madam; this is a question which, after five thousand years, is yet undecided; a question, whether in theology or philosophy, one of the most important that can come before the human understanding."

Mrs. Knowles mentioned, as a proselyte to Quakerism, Miss ——, ¹ a young lady well known to Dr. Johnson, for whom he had

¹ Jane Harry. She was the illegitimate daughter, by a mulatto woman, of what Miss Seward calls (*Lett.* i. 97) a *planter in the East Indies*, but, in truth, of a West Indian, who sent her over to England for her education. At the friend's house where she resided Mrs. Knowles was a frequent visitor; and by degrees she converted this inexperienced, and probably not very wise, young creature to Quakerism. Miss Seward, with more than her usual inaccuracy, has made a romantic history of this lady; and, amongst other fables, states that she sacrificed a fortune of £100,000 by her conscientious conversion. Mr. Markland has been

shown much affection; while she ever had, and still retained, a great respect for him. Mrs. Knowles at the same time took an opportunity of letting him know "that the amiable young creature was sorry at finding that he was offended at her leaving the Church of England, and embracing a simpler faith;" and, in the gentlest and most persuasive manner, solicited his kind indulgence for what was sincerely a matter of conscience. JOHNSON (frowning very angrily), "Madam, she is an odious wench. She could not have any proper conviction that it was her duty to change her religion, which is the most important of all subjects, and should be studied with all care, and with all the helps we can get. She knew no more of the church which she left, and that which she embraced, than she did of the difference between the Copernican and Ptolemaic systems." MRS. KNOWLES. "She had the New Testament before her." JOHNSON. "Madam, she could not understand the New Testament, the most difficult book in the world, for which the study of a life is required." MRS. KNOWLES. "It is clear as to essentials." JOHNSON. "But not as to controversial points. The heathens were easily converted, because they had nothing to give up; but we ought not, without very strong conviction indeed, to desert the religion in which we have been educated. That is the religion given you, the religion in which it may be said Providence has placed you. If you live conscientiously in that religion, you may be safe. But error is dangerous indeed, if you err when you choose a religion for yourself." MRS. KNOWLES. "Must we then go by implicit faith?" JOHNSON. "Why, Madam, the greatest part of our knowledge is implicit faith; and as to religion, have we heard all that a disciple of Confucius, all that a Mahometan, can say for himself?" He then rose again into passion, and attacked the young proselyte in the severest terms of reproach, so that both the ladies seemed to be much shocked.

We remained together till it was pretty late. Notwithstanding occasional explosions of violence, we were all delighted upon the

so kind as to put into my hands evidence from a highly respectable member of the father's family, which proves that Jane Harry's fortune was but £1,000; and so little was her father displeased at her conversion, that he rather approved of it, and gave her £1,000 more. So vanishes another of Miss Seward's romances.—C.

whole with Johnson. I compared him at this time to a warm West Indian climate, where you have a bright sun, quick vegetation, luxuriant foliage, luscious fruits; but where the same heat sometimes produces thunder, lightning, and earthquakes in a terrible degree.¹

¹ Mrs. Knowles, not satisfied with the fame of her needlework, the "*subtle pictures*" mentioned by Johnson, in which she has indeed displayed much dexterity, nay, with the fame of reasoning better than women generally do, as I have fairly shown her to have done, communicated to me a dialogue of considerable length, which, after many years had elapsed, she wrote down as having passed between Dr. Johnson and her at this interview. As I had not the least recollection of it, and did not find the smallest trace of it in my "record" taken at the time, I could not, in consistency with my firm regard to authenticity, insert it in my work. It has, however, been published in the "Gentleman's Magazine" for June, 1791 [v. lxi. p. 500]. It chiefly relates to the principles of the sect called Quakers; and no doubt the lady appears to have greatly the advantage of Dr. Johnson in argument, as well as expression. From what I have now stated, and from the internal evidence of the paper itself, any one who may have the curiosity to peruse it will judge whether it was wrong to and to reject it, however willing to gratify Mrs. Knowles.—E.



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